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HYPATIA:

OR,

NEW FOES WITH AN OLD FACE.

BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY,

AUTHOR OF "TWO YEARS AGO," "ALTON LOCKE."

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LEIPZIG

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DEDICATION.

TO MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER.

My dear Parents,

When you shall have read this book, and considered the view of human relationships which is set forth in it, you will be at no loss to discover why I have dedicated it to you, as one paltry witness of an union and of a debt which, though they may seem to have begun with birth, and to have grown with your most loving education, yet cannot die with death: but are spiritual, indefeasible, eternal in the heavens with that God from Whom every fatherhood in heaven and earth is named.

C. K.

PREFACE.

A PICTURE of life in the fifth century must needs contain much which will be painful to any reader, and which the young and innocent will do well to leave altogether unread. It has to represent a very hideous, though a very great, age; one of those critical and cardinal eras in the history of the human race, in which virtues and vices manifest themselves side by side — even, at times, in the same person — with the most startling openness and power. One who writes of such an era labours under a troublesome disadvantage. He dare not tell how evil people were; he will not be believed if he tells how good they were. In the present case that disadvantage is doubled; for while the sins of the Church, however heinous, were still such as admit of being expressed in words, the sins of the heathen world against which she fought, were utterly indescribable; and the Christian apologist is thus compelled, for the sake of decency, to state the Church's case far more weakly than the facts deserve.

Not, be it ever remembered, that the slightest suspicion of immorality attaches either to the heroine of this book, or to the leading philosophers of her school, for several centuries. Howsoever base and profligate their disciples, or the Manichees, may have been, the great Neo-Platonists were, as Manes himself was, persons of the most rigid and ascetic virtue.

For a time had arrived, in which no teacher who did not put forth the most lofty pretensions to righteousness could expect a hearing. That Divine Word, Who is "The Light Who lighteth every man which cometh into the world," had awakened in the heart of mankind a moral craving never before felt in any strength, except by a few isolated philosophers or prophets. The Spirit had been poured out on all flesh; and from one end of the empire to the other, from the slave in the mill to the emperor on his throne, all hearts were either hungering and thirsting after righteousness, or learning to do homage to those who did so. And He who excited the craving, was also furnishing that which would satisfy it; and was teaching mankind by a long and painful education, to distinguish the truth from its innumerable counterfeits, and to find, for the first

time in the world's life, a good news not merely for the select few, but for all mankind without respect of rank or race.

For somewhat more than four hundred years, the Roman Empire and the Christian Church, born into the world almost at the same moment, had been developing themselves side by side as two great rival powers, in deadly struggle for the possession of the human race. The weapons of the empire had been not merely an overwhelming physical force, and a ruthless lust of aggressive conquest, but, even more powerful still, an unequalled genius for organization, and an uniform system of external law and order. This was generally a real boon to conquered nations, because it substituted a fixed and regular spoliation for the fortuitous and arbitrary miseries of savage warfare: but it arrayed, meanwhile, on the side of the empire the wealthier citizens of every province, by allowing them their share in the plunder of the labouring masses below them. These, in the country districts, were utterly enslaved, while, in the cities, their nominal freedom was of little use to masses kept from starvation by the alms of the government, and drugged into brutish good-humour by a vast system

of public spectacles, in which the realms of nature and of art were ransacked to glut the wonder, lust, and ferocity of a degraded populace.

Against this vast organization the Church had been fighting for now four hundred years, armed only with its own mighty and all-embracing message, and with the manifestation of a spirit of purity and virtue, of love and self-sacrifice, which had proved itself mightier to melt and weld together the hearts of men, than all the force and terror, all the mechanical organization, all the sensual baits with which the empire had been contending against that Gospel in which it had recognised, instinctively and at first sight, its internecine foe.

And now the Church had conquered. The weak things of this world had confounded the strong. In spite of the devilish cruelties of persecutors; in spite of the contaminating atmosphere of sin which surrounded her; in spite of having to form herself, not out of a race of pure and separate creatures, but by a most literal "new birth" out of those very fallen masses who insulted and persecuted her; in spite of having to endure within herself continual outbursts of the evil passions in which her members had once indulged without check; in spite of a thousand

counterfeits which sprung up around her and within her, claiming to be parts of her, and alluring men to themselves by that very exclusiveness and party arrogance which disproved their claim; in spite of all, she had conquered. The very emperors had arrayed themselves on her side. Julian's last attempt to restore paganism by imperial influence had only proved that the old faith had lost all hold upon the hearts of the masses; and at his death the great tide-wave of new opinion rolled on unchecked, and the rulers of earth were fain to swim with the stream; to accept, in words, at least, the Church's laws as theirs; to acknowledge a King of kings to whom even they owed homage and obedience; and to call their own slaves their "poorer brethren," and often, too, their "spiritual superiors."

But if the emperors had become Christian, the Empire had not. Here and there an abuse was lopped off; or an edict was passed for the visitation of prisons and for the welfare of prisoners; or a Theodosius was recalled to justice and humanity for a while by the stern rebukes of an Ambrose. But the Empire was still the same; still a great tyranny, enslaving the masses, crushing national life, fattening

itself and its officials on a system of world-wide robbery; and while it was paramount, there could be no hope for the human race. Nay, there were even those among the Christians who saw, like Dante afterwards, in the "fatal gift of Constantine," and the truce between the Church and the Empire, fresh and more deadly danger. Was not the Empire trying to extend over the Church itself that upas shadow with which it had withered up every other form of human existence; to make her, too, its stipendiary slave-official, to be pampered when obedient, and scourged whenever she dare assert a free will of her own, a law beyond that of her tyrants; to throw on her, by a refined hypocrisy, the care and support of the masses on whose lifeblood it was feeding? So thought many then, and, as I fancy, not unwisely.

But if the social condition of the civilized world was anomalous at the beginning of the fifth century, its spiritual state was still more so. The universal fusion of races, languages, and customs, which had gone on for four centuries under the Roman rule, had produced a corresponding fusion of creeds, an universal fermentation of human thought and faith. All honest belief in the old local superstitions of paganism

had been long dying out before the more palpable and material idolatry of Emperor-worship; and the gods of the nations, unable to deliver those who had trusted in them, became one by one the vassals of the "Divus Cæsar," neglected by the philosophic rich, and only worshipped by the lower classes, where the old rites still pandered to their grosser appetites, or subserved the wealth and importance of some particular locality.

In the mean while, the minds of men, cut adrift from their ancient moorings, wandered wildly over pathless seas of speculative doubt, and especially in the more metaphysical and contemplative East, attempted to solve for themselves the questions of man's relation to the unseen by those thousand schisms, heresies, and theosophies (it is a disgrace to the word philosophy to call them by it), on the records of which the student now gazes bewildered, unable alike to count or to explain their fantasies.

Yet even these, like every outburst of free human thought, had their use and their fruit. They brought before the minds of churchmen a thousand new questions which must be solved, unless the Church was to relinquish for ever her claims as the great

teacher and satisfier of the human soul. To study these bubbles, as they formed and burst on every wave of human life; to feel, too often by sad experience, as Augustine knew, the charm of their allurements; to eliminate the truths at which they aimed from the falsehood which they offered as its substitute; to exhibit the Catholic Church as possessing, in the great facts which she proclaimed, full satisfaction, even for the most subtle metaphysical cravings of a diseased age;— that was the work of the time; and men were sent to do it, and aided in their labour by the very causes which had produced the intellectual revolution. The general intermixture of ideas, creeds, and races, even the mere physical facilities for intercourse between different parts of the Empire, helped to give the great Christian fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries a breadth of observation, a depth of thought, a large-hearted and large-minded patience and tolerance, such as, we may say boldly, the Church has since beheld but rarely, and the world never; at least if we are to judge those great men by what they had, and not by what they had not, and to believe, as we are bound, that had they lived now, and not then, they would have tow-

ered as far above the heads of this generation as they did above the heads of their own. And thus an age, which, to the shallow insight of a sneerer like Gibbon, seems only a rotting and aimless chaos of sensuality and anarchy, fanaticism and hypocrisy, produced an Athanase and a Jerome, a Chrysostom and an Augustine; absorbed into the sphere of Christianity all which was most valuable in the philosophies of Greece and Egypt, and in the social organization of Rome, as an heirloom for nations yet unborn; and laid in foreign lands, by unconscious agents, the foundations of all European thought and ethics.

But the health of a Church depends not merely on the creed which it professes, not even on the wisdom and holiness of a few great ecclesiastics, but on the faith and virtue of its individual members. The *mens sana* must have a *corpus sanum* to inhabit. And even for the Western Church, the lofty future which was in store for it would have been impossible, without some infusion of new and healthier blood into the veins of a world drained and tainted by the influence of Rome.

And the new blood, at the era of this story, was at hand. The great tide of those Gothic nations, of

which the Norwegian and the German are the purest remaining types, though every nation of Europe, from Gibraltar to St. Petersburg, owes to them the most precious elements of strength, was sweeping onward, wave over wave, in a steady south-western current, across the whole Roman territory, and only stopping and recoiling when it reached the shores of the Mediterranean. Those wild tribes were bringing with them into the magic circle of the Western Church's influence the very materials which she required for the building up of a future Christendom, and which she could find as little in the Western Empire as in the Eastern; comparative purity of morals; sacred respect for woman, for family life, for law, equal justice, individual freedom, and, above all, for honesty in word and deed; bodies untainted by hereditary effeminacy, hearts earnest though genial, and blest with a strange willingness to learn, even from those whom they despised; a brain equal to that of the Roman in practical power, and not too far behind that of the Eastern in imaginative and speculative acuteness.

And their strength was felt at once. Their vanguard, confined with difficulty for three centuries beyond the Eastern Alps, at the expense of sanguinary

wars, had been adopted, wherever it was practicable, into the service of the Empire; and the heart's core of the Roman legions was composed of Gothic officers and soldiers. But now the main body had arrived. Tribe after tribe was crowding down to the Alps, and trampling upon each other on the frontiers of the Empire. The Huns, singly their inferiors, pressed them from behind with the irresistible weight of numbers; Italy, with her rich cities and fertile lowlands, beckoned them on to plunder; as auxiliaries, they had learnt their own strength and Roman weakness; a *casus belli* was soon found. . . . How iniquitous was the conduct of the sons of Theodosius, in refusing the usual bounty, by which the Goths were bribed not to attack the empire! — The whole pent-up deluge burst over the plains of Italy, and the Western Empire became from that day forth a dying idiot, while the new invaders divided Europe among themselves. The fifteen years before the time of this tale had decided the fate of Greece; the last four that of Rome itself. The countless treasures which five centuries of rapine had accumulated round the Capitol had become the prey of men clothed in sheepskins and horse-hide; and the sister of an emperor had found her beauty,

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[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] the mangled limbs of the Old World
were washing in the Medea's caldron, to come forth
whole, and young and strong. The Longobards,
[illegible] of their race, had found a temporary resting-place upon the Austrian frontier, after long southward wanderings from the Swedish mountains, soon to be dispossessed again by the advancing Huns, and, crossing the Alps, to give their name for ever to the plains of Lombardy. A few more tumultuous years, and the Franks would find themselves lords of the Lower Rhine-land; and before the hairs of Hypatia's scholars had grown grey, the mythic Hengst and Horsa would have landed on the shores of Kent, and an English nation have begun its world-wide life.

But some great Providence forbade to our race, triumphant in every other quarter, a footing beyond the Mediterranean, or even in Constantinople, which to this day preserves in Europe the faith and man-

ners of Asia. The Eastern World seemed barred, by some stern doom, from the only influence which could have regenerated it. Every attempt of the Gothic races to establish themselves beyond the sea, whether in the form of an organized kingdom, as did the Vandals in Africa; or of a mere band of brigands, as did the Goths in Asia Minor, under Gainas; or of a prætorian guard, as did the Varangians of the middle age; or as religious invaders, as did the Crusaders, ended only in the corruption and disappearance of the colonists. That extraordinary reform in morals, which, according to Salvian and his contemporaries, the Vandal conquerors worked in North Africa, availed them nothing; they lost more than they gave. Climate, bad example, and the luxury of power degraded them in one century into a race of helpless and debauched slaveholders, doomed to utter extermination before the semi-Gothic armies of Belisarius; and with them vanished the last chance that the Gothic races would exercise on the Eastern World the same stern yet wholesome discipline under which the Western had been restored to life.

The Egyptian and Syrian Churches, therefore, were destined to labour not for themselves, but for

as. The signs of disease and decrepitude were already but too manifest in them. That very peculiar turn of the Greco-Eastern mind, which made them the great thinkers of the then world, had the effect of drawing them away from practice to speculation; and the races of Egypt and Syria were effeminate, over-civilized, exhausted by centuries during which no infusion of fresh blood had come to renew the stock. Morbid, self-conscious, physically indolent, incapable then as now, of personal or political freedom, they afforded material out of which fanatics might easily be made, but not citizens of the kingdom of God. The very ideas of family and national life — those two divine roots of the Church, severed from which she is certain to wither away into that most godless and most cruel of spectres, a religious world — had perished in the East from the evil influence of the universal practice of slaveholding, as well as from the degradation of that Jewish nation which had been for ages the great witness for those ideas; and all classes, like their forefather Adam — like, indeed, "the old Adam" in every man and in every age — were shifting the blame of sin from their own consciences to human relationships and duties — and therein, to the God

who had appointed them; and saying as of old, "*The woman whom thou gavest to be with me*, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." The passionate Eastern character, like all weak ones, found total abstinence easier than temperance, religious thought more pleasant than godly action; and a monastic world grew up all over the East, of such vastness that in Egypt it was said to rival in numbers the lay population, producing, with an enormous decrease in the actual amount of moral evil, an equally great enervation and decrease of the population. Such a people could offer no resistance to the steadily increasing tyranny of the Eastern Empire. In vain did such men as Chrysostom and Basil oppose their personal influence to the hideous intrigues and villanies of the Byzantine court; the ever-downward career of Eastern Christianity went on unchecked for two more miserable centuries, side by side with the upward development of the Western Church; and, while the successors of the great Saint Gregory were converting and civilizing a new-born Europe, the Churches of the East were vanishing before Mohammedan invaders, strong by living trust in that living God, Whom the Christians, while they hated and persecuted each other

for arguments about Him, were denying and blaspheming in every action of their lives.

But at the period whereof this story treats, the Græco-Eastern mind was still in the middle of its great work. That wonderful metaphysic subtlety, which in phrases and definitions too often unmeaning to our grosser intellect, saw the symbols of the most important spiritual realities, and felt that on the distinction between *homoousios* and *homoiousios* might hang the solution of the whole problem of humanity, was set to battle in Alexandria, the ancient stronghold of Greek philosophy, with the effete remains of the very scientific thought to which it owed its extraordinary culture. Monastic isolation from family and national duties especially fitted the fathers of that period for the task, by giving them leisure, if nothing else, to face questions with a lifelong earnestness impossible to the more social and practical Northern mind. Our duty is, instead of sneering at them as pedantic dreamers, to thank Heaven that men were found, just at the time when they were wanted, to do for us what we could never have done for ourselves; to leave to us, as a precious heirloom, bought most truly with the lifeblood of their race, a meta-

physic at once Christian and scientific, every attempt to improve on which has hitherto been found a failure; and to battle victoriously with that strange brood of theoretic monsters begotten by effete Greek philosophy upon Egyptian symbolism, Chaldee astrology, Parsee dualism, Brahminic spiritualism — graceful and gorgeous phantoms, whereof somewhat more will be said in the coming chapters.

I have, in my sketch of Hypatia and her fate, closely followed authentic history, especially Socrates' account of the closing scene, as given in Book vii., § 15, of his "Ecclesiastical History." I am inclined, however, for various historical reasons, to date her death two years earlier than he does. The tradition that she was the wife of Isidore, the philosopher, I reject, with Gibbon, as a palpable anachronism of at least fifty years (Isidore's master, Proclus, not having been born till the year before Hypatia's death), contradicted, moreover, by Photius, who says distinctly, after comparing Hypatia and Isidore, that Isidore married a certain "Domna." No hint, moreover, of her having been married, appears in any contemporary authors; and the name of Isidore nowhere occurs among those of the many mutual friends to

whom Synesius sends messages in his letters to Hypatia, in which, if anywhere, we should find mention of a husband, had one existed. To Synesius's most charming letters, as well as to those of Isidore, the good Abbot of Pelusium, I beg leave to refer those readers who wish for further information about the private life of the fifth century.

I cannot hope that these pages will be altogether free from anachronisms and errors. I can only say that I have laboured honestly and industriously to discover the truth, even in its minutest details, and to sketch the age, its manners, and its literature, as I found them — altogether artificial, slipshod, effete, resembling far more the times of Louis Quinze than those of Sophocles and Plato. And so I send forth this little sketch, ready to give my hearty thanks to any reviewer who, by exposing my mistakes, shall teach me and the public somewhat more about the last struggle between the Young Church and the Old World.

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HYPATIA;

OR,

NEW FOES WITH AN OLD FACE.

VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.

The Laura.

In the four hundred and thirteenth year of the Christian Era, some three hundred miles above Alexandria, the young monk Philammon was sitting on the edge of a low range of inland cliffs, crested with drifting sand. Behind him the desert sand-waste stretched, lifeless, interminable, reflecting its lurid glare on the horizon of the cloudless vault of blue. At his feet the sand dripped and trickled, in yellow rivulets, from crack to crack and ledge to ledge, or whirled past him in tiny jets of yellow smoke, before the fitful summer airs. Here and there, upon the face of the cliffs which walled in the opposite side of the narrow glen below, were cavernous tombs, huge old quarries, with obelisks and half-cut pillars, standing as the workmen had left them centuries before; the sand was slipping down and piling up around them; their heads were frosted with the arid snow; everywhere was

silence, desolation — the grave of a dead nation, in a dying land. And there he sat musing above it all, full of life and youth and health and beauty — a young Apollo of the desert. His only clothing was a ragged sheep-skin, bound with a leathern girdle. His long black locks, unshorn from childhood, waved and glistened in the sun; a rich dark down on cheek and chin showed the spring of healthful manhood; his hard hands and sinewy sun-burnt limbs told of labour and endurance; his flashing eyes and beetling brow, of daring, fancy, passion, thought, which had no sphere of action in such a place. What did his glorious young humanity alone among the tombs?

So perhaps he, too, thought, as he passed his hand across his brow, as if to sweep away some gathering dream, and sighing, rose and wandered along the cliffs, peering downward at every point and cranny, in search of fuel for the monastery from whence he came.

Simple as was the material which he sought, consisting chiefly of the low arid desert shrubs, with now and then a fragment of wood from some deserted quarry or ruin, it was becoming scarcer and scarcer round Abbot Pambo's Laura at Scetis, and long before Philammon had collected his daily quantity, he had strayed further from his home than he had ever been before.

Suddenly, at a turn of the glen, he came upon a sight new to him .... a temple carven in the sandstone cliff; and in front, a smooth platform, strewn with beams and mouldering tools, and here and there a scull bleaching among the sand, perhaps of some workman slaughtered at his labour in one of the

thousand wars of old. The abbot, his spiritual father — indeed, the only father whom he knew, for his earliest recollections were of the Laura and the old man's cell — had strictly forbidden him to enter, even to approach any of those relics of ancient idolatry: but a broad terrace-road led down to the platform from the table-land above; the plentiful supply of fuel was too tempting to be passed by . . . He would go down, gather a few sticks, and then return, to tell the abbot of the treasure which he had found, and consult him as to the propriety of revisiting it.

So down he went, hardly daring to raise his eyes to the alluring iniquities of the painted imagery which, gaudy in crimson and blue, still blazed out upon the desolate solitude, uninjured by that rainless air. But he was young, and youth is curious; and the devil, at least in the fifth century, busy with young brains. Now Philammon believed most utterly in the devil, and night and day devoutly prayed to be delivered from him; so he crossed himself, and ejaculated, honestly enough, "Lord, turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity!" . . . and looked nevertheless. . . . .

And who could have helped looking at those four colossal kings, who sat there grim and motionless, their huge hands laid upon their knees in everlasting self-assured repose, seeming to bear up the mountain on their stately heads? A sense of awe, weakness, all but fear, came over him. He dare not stoop to take up the wood at his feet, their great stern eyes watched him so steadily.

Round their knees and round their thrones were mystic characters engraven, symbol after symbol, line below line — the ancient wisdom of the Egyptians,

wherein Moses the man of God was learned of old — why should not he know it too? What awful secrets might not he hidden there about the great world, past, present, and future, of which he knew only so small a speck? Those kings who sat there, they had known it all; their sharp lips seemed parting, ready to speak to him. . . . . Oh, that they would speak for once! . . . . and yet that grim sneering smile, that seemed to look down on him from the heights of their power and wisdom, with calm contempt . . . . him, the poor youth, picking up the leaving and rags of their past majesty . . . . He dare look at them no more.

So he looked past them, into the temple halls; into a lustrous abyss of cool green shade, deepening on and inward, pillar after pillar, vista after vista, into deepest night. And dimly through the gloom he could descry, on every wall and column, gorgeous arabesques, long lines of pictured story; triumphs and labours; rows of captives in foreign and fantastic dresses, leading strange animals, bearing the tributes of unknown lands; rows of ladies at feasts, their heads crowned with garlands, the fragrant lotus-flower in every hand, while slaves brought wine and perfumes, and children sat upon their knees, and husbands by their side; and dancing girls, in transparent robes and golden girdles, tossed their tawny limbs wildly among the throng . . . . What was the meaning of it all? Why had it all been? Why had it gone on thus, the great world, century after century, millennium after millennium, eating and drinking, and marrying and giving in marriage, and knowing nothing better . . . . how could they know anything better? Their forefathers had lost the light ages and ages before they were born. . . .

And Christ had not come for ages and ages after they were dead .... How could they know? .. And yet they were all in hell .... every one of them. Every one of these ladies who sat there, with her bushy locks, and garlands, and jewelled collars, and lotus-flowers, and gauzy dress, displaying all her slender limbs — who, perhaps, when she was alive, smiled so sweetly, and went so gaily, and had children, and friends, and never once thought of what was going to happen to her what must happen to her .... She was in hell .... Burning for ever, and ever, and ever, there below his feet. He stared down on the rocky floors. If he could but see through them .... and the eye of faith could see through it .... he should behold her writhing and twisting among the flickering flame, scorched, glowing .... in everlasting agony such as the thought of enduring for a moment made him shudder. He had burnt his hands once, when a palm-leaf hut caught fire .... He recollected what that was like .... She was enduring ten thousand times more than that, for ever .... He should hear her shrieking in vain for a drop of water to cool her tongue .... He had never heard a human being shriek but once .... a boy bathing on the opposite Nile bank, whom a crocodile had dragged down .... and that scream, faint and distant as it came across the mighty tide, had rung intolerable in his ears for days .... and to think of all which echoed through those vaults of fire — for ever! Was the thought bearable? — was it possible? Millions upon millions burning for ever for Adam's fall .... Could God be just in that? ...

It was the temptation of a fiend! He had entered

the unhallowed precincts, where devils still lingered about their ancient shrines; he had let his eyes devour the abominations of the heathen, and given place to the devil. He would flee home to confess it all to his father. He would punish him as he deserved, pray for him, forgive him. And yet could he tell him all? Could he, dare he, confess to him the whole truth — the insatiable craving to know the mysteries of learning — to see the great roaring world of men, which had been growing up in him slowly, month after month, till now it had assumed this fearful shape? He could stay no longer in the desert. This world which sent all souls to hell — was it as bad as monks declared it was? It must be, else how could such be the fruit of it? But it was too awful a thought to be taken on trust. No; he must go and see.

Filled with such fearful questionings, half-inarticulate and vague, like the thoughts of a child, the untutored youth went wandering on, till he reached the edge of the cliff below which lay his home.

It lay pleasantly enough, that lonely Laura, or lane of rude Cyclopean cells, under the perpetual shadow of the southern wall of crags, amid its grove of ancient date-trees. A branching cavern in the cliff supplied the purposes of a chapel, a store-house, and a hospital; while on the sunny slope across the glen lay the common gardens of the brotherhood, green with millet, maize, and beans, among which a tiny streamlet, husbanded and guided with the most thrifty care, wandered down from the cliff foot, and spread perpetual verdure over the little plot which voluntary and fraternal labour had painfully redeemed from the inroads of the all-devouring sand. For that garden,

like everything else in the Laura, except each brother's seven feet of stone sleeping-hut, was the common property, and therefore the common care and joy, of all. For the common good, as well as for his own, each man had toiled up the glen with his palm-leaf basket of black mud from the river Nile, over whose broad sheet of silver the glen's mouth yawned abrupt. For the common good, each man had swept the ledges clear of sand, and sown in the scanty artificial soil, the harvest of which all were to share alike. To buy clothes, books, and chapel-furniture for the common necessities, education, and worship, each man sat, day after day, week after week, his mind full of high and heavenly thoughts, weaving the leaves of their little palm-copse into baskets, which an aged monk exchanged for goods with the more prosperous and frequented monasteries of the opposite bank. Thither Philammon rowed the old man over, week by week, in a light canoe of papyrus, and fished, as he sat waiting for him, for the common meal. A simple, happy, gentle life was that of the Laura, all portioned out by rules and methods, which were held hardly less sacred than those of the Scriptures, on which they were supposed (and not so wrongly either) to have been framed. Each man had food and raiment, shelter on earth, friends and counsellors, living trust in the continual care of Almighty God; and, blazing before his eyes, by day and night, the hope of everlasting glory beyond all poets' dreams. . . . . And what more would man have had in those days? Thither they had fled out of cities, compared with which Paris is earnest and Gomorrha chaste, — out of a rotten, infernal, dying world of tyrants and slaves, hypocrites and wantons, — to

ponder undisturbed on duty and on judgment, on death and eternity, heaven and hell; to find a common creed, a common interest, a common hope, common duties, pleasures, and sorrows. . . . . True, they had many of them fled from the post where God had placed them, when they fled from man into the Thebaid waste. . . . . What sort of post and what sort of an age they were, from which those old monks fled, we shall see, perhaps, before this tale is told out.

"Thou art late, son," said the abbot, steadfastly working away at his palm-basket, as Philammon approached.

"Fuel is scarce, and I was forced to go far."

"A monk should not answer till he is questioned. I did not ask the reason. Where didst thou find that wood?"

"Before the temple, far up the glen."

"The temple! What didst thou see there?"

No answer. Pambo looked up with his keen black eye.

"Thou hast entered it, and lusted after its abominations."

"I — I did not enter; but I looked —"

"And what didst thou see? Women?"

Philammon was silent.

"Have I not bidden you never to look on the face of women? Are they not the first-fruits of the devil, the authors of all evil, the subtlest of all Satan's snares? Are they not accursed for ever, for the deceit of their first mother, by whom sin entered into the world? A woman first opened the gates of hell; and, until this day, they are the portresses thereof. Unhappy boy! what hast thou done?"

"They were but painted on the walls."

"Ah!" said the abbot, as if suddenly relieved from a heavy burden. "But how knewest thou them to be women, when thou hast never yet, unless thou liest — which I believe not of thee — seen the face of a daughter of Eve?"

"Perhaps — perhaps," said Philammon, as if suddenly relieved by a new suggestion — "perhaps they were only devils. They must have been, I think, for they were so very beautiful."

"Ah! how knowest thou that devils are beautiful?"

"I was launching the boat, a week ago, with Father Aufugus; and on the bank, . . . not very near, . . . there were two creatures . . . . with long hair, and striped all over the lower half of their bodies with black, and red, and yellow . . . . and they were gathering flowers on the shore. Father Aufugus turned away; but I . . . . I could not help thinking them the most beautiful things that I had ever seen . . . . so I asked him why he turned away; and he said those were the same sort of devils which tempted the blessed St. Anthony. Then I recollected having heard it read aloud, how Satan tempted Anthony in the shape of a beautiful woman. . . . . And so . . . . and so . . . . those figures on the wall were very like . . . . and I thought they might be . . . ."

And the poor boy, who considered that he was making confession of a deadly and shameful sin, blushed scarlet, and stammered, and at last stopped.

"And thou thoughtest them beautiful? Oh utter corruption of the flesh! — oh subtilty of Satan! The Lord forgive thee, as I do, my poor child: henceforth thou goest not beyond the garden walls."

"Not beyond the walls! Impossible! I cannot! If thou wert not my father, I would say, I will not! — I must have liberty! — I must see for myself — I must judge for myself, what this world is of which you all talk so bitterly. I long for no pomps and vanities. I will promise you this moment, if you will, never to re-enter a heathen temple — to hide my face in the dust whenever I approach a woman. But I must — I must see the world; I must see the great mother-church in Alexandria, and the patriarch, and his clergy. If they can serve God in the city, why not I? I could do more for God there than here. . . . . Not that I despise this work — not that I am ungrateful to you — oh, never, never that! — but I pant for the battle. Let me go! I am not discontented with you, but with myself. I know that obedience is noble; but danger is nobler still. If you have seen the world, why should not I? If you have fled from it because you found it too evil to live in, why should not I, and return to you here of my own will, never to leave you? ... And yet Cyril and his clergy have not fled from it . . . ."

Desperately and breathlessly did Philammon drive this speech out of his inmost heart; and then waited, expecting the good abbot to strike him on the spot. If he had, the young man would have submitted patiently; so would any man, however venerable, in that monastery. . . . . Why not? Duly, after long companionship, thought, and prayer, they had elected Pambo for their abbot — abba — father — the wisest, eldest-hearted and headed of them — if he was that, it was time that he should be obeyed. . . . . And obeyed he was, with a loyal, reasonable love, and yet with an implicit, soldier-like obedience, which many a

king and conqueror might envy. Were they cowards and slaves? The Roman legionaries should be good judges on that point. . . . . They used to say that no armed barbarian, Goth or Vandal, Moor or Spaniard, was so terrible as the unarmed monk of the Thebaid.

Twice the old man lifted his staff to strike; twice he laid it down again; and then, slowly rising, left Philammon kneeling there, and moved away deliberately, and with eyes fixed on the ground, to the house of the brother Aufugus.

Every one in the Laura honoured Aufugus. There was a mystery about him, which heightened the charm of his surpassing sanctity, his childlike sweetness and humility. It was whispered — when the monks seldom and cautiously did whisper together in their lonely walks — that he had been once a great man; that he had come from a great city — perhaps from Rome itself. And the simple monks were proud to think that they had among them a man who had seen Rome. At least, Abbot Pambo respected him. He was never beaten; never even reproved — perhaps he never required it; but still it was the meed of all; and was not the abbot a little partial? Yet, certainly, when Theophilus sent up a messenger from Alexandria, rousing every Laura with the news of the sack of Rome by Alaric, did not Pambo take him first to the cell of Aufugus, and sit with him there three whole hours in secret consultation, before he told the awful story to the rest of the brotherhood? And did not Aufugus himself give letters to the messenger, written with his own hand, containing, as was said, deep secrets of worldly policy, known only to himself? So, when the little lane of holy men, each peering stealthily over his plaiting-work from the door-

way of his sandstone cell, saw the abbot, after his unwonted passion, leave the culprit kneeling, and take his way toward the sage's dwelling, they judged that something strange and delicate had befallen the common weal, and each wished, without envy, that he were as wise as the man whose counsel was to solve the difficulty.

For an hour or more the abbot remained there, talking earnestly and low; and then a solemn sound as of the two old men praying with sobs and tears; and every brother bowed his head, and whispered a hope that He whom they served might guide them for the good of the Laura, and of his Church, and of the great heathen world beyond; and still Philammon knelt motionless, awaiting his sentence; his heart filled — who can tell how? "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy." So thought he as he knelt; and so think I, too, knowing that in the pettiest character there are unfathomable depths, which the poet, all-seeing though he may pretend to be, can never analyze, but must only dimly guess at, and still more dimly sketch them by the actions which they beget.

At last Pambo returned, deliberate, still, and slow, as he had gone, and seating himself within his cell, spoke —

"And the youngest said, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to my share. . . . . And he took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. Thou shalt go, my son. But first come after me, and speak with Aufugus."

Philammon, like every one else, loved Aufugus; and when the abbot retired and left the two alone together, he felt no dread or shame about unburdening his whole heart to him. . . . . Long and passionately he spoke, in answer to the gentle questions of the old man, who, without the rigidity or pedantic solemnity of the monk, interrupted the youth, and let himself be interrupted in return, gracefully, genially, almost playfully. And yet there was a melancholy about his tone, as he answered to the youth's appeal —

"Tertullian, Origen, Clement, Cyprian — all these moved in the world; all these, and many more beside, whose names we honour, whose prayers we invoke, were learned in the wisdom of the heathen, and fought and laboured, unspotted, in the world; and why not I? Cyril the Patriarch, himself, was he not called from the caves of Nitria to sit on the throne of Alexandria?"

Slowly the old man lifted his hand, and putting back the thick locks of the kneeling youth, gazed, with soft pitying eyes, long and earnestly into his face.

"And thou wouldst see the world, poor fool? And thou wouldst see the world?"

"I would convert the world!"

"Thou must know it, first. And shall I tell thee what that world is like, which seems to thee so easy to convert? Here I sit, the poor unknown old monk, until I die, fasting and praying, if perhaps God will have mercy on my soul: but little thou knowest how I have seen it. Little thou knowest, or thou wouldst be well content to rest here till the end. I was Arsenius. . . . . Ah! vain old man that I am! Thou hast never heard that name, at which once queens would whisper and grow pale. Vanitas vanitatum! omnia va-

nitas! And yet he, at whose frown half the world trembles, has trembled himself at mine. I was the tutor of Arcadius."

"The Emperor of Byzantium?"

"Even so, my son, even so. There I saw the world which thou wouldst see. And what saw I? Even what thou wilt see. Eunuchs the tyrants of their own sovereigns. Bishops kissing the feet of parricides and harlots. Saints tearing saints in pieces for a word, while sinners cheer them on to the unnatural fight. Liars thanked for lying, hypocrites rejoicing in their hypocrisy. The many sold and butchered for the malice, the caprice, the vanity of the few. The plunderers of the poor plundered in their turn by worse devourers than themselves. Every attempt at reform the parent of worse scandals; every mercy begetting fresh cruelties; every persecutor silenced, only to enable others to persecute him in their turn; every devil who is exorcised, returning with seven others worse than himself, falsehood and selfishness, spite and lust, confusion seven times confounded, Satan casting out Satan everywhere — from the emperor who wantons on his throne, to the slave who blasphemes beneath his fetters."

"If Satan cast out Satan, his kingdom shall not stand."

"In the world to come. But in this world it shall stand and conquer, even worse and worse, until the end. These are the last days spoken of by the prophets, the beginning of woes such as never have been on the earth before. — 'On earth distress of nations with perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for the dread of those things which are coming on the earth.' I have seen it long. Year after year I have

watched them coming nearer and ever nearer in their course, like the whirling sandstorms of the desert, which sweep past the caravan, and past again, and yet overwhelm it after all — that black flood of the northern barbarians. I foretold it; I prayed against it; but, like Cassandra's of old, my prophecy and my prayers were alike unheard. My pupil spurned my warnings. The lusts of youth, the intrigues of courtiers, were stronger than the warning voice of God; then I ceased to hope; I ceased to pray for the glorious city, for I knew that her sentence was gone forth; I saw her in the spirit, even as Saint John saw her in the Revelations; her, and her sins, and her ruin. And I fled secretly at night, and buried myself here in the desert, to await the end of the world. Night and day I pray the Lord to accomplish his elect, and to hasten his kingdom. Morning by morning I look up trembling, and yet in hope, for the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood. and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the skies pass away like a scroll, and the fountains of the nether fire burst up around our feet, and the end of all shall come. And thou wouldst go into the world from which I fled?"

"If the harvest be at hand, the Lord needs labourers. If the times be awful, I should be doing awful things in them. Send me, and let that day find me, where I long to be, in the forefront of the battle of the Lord."

"The Lord's voice be obeyed! Thou shalt go. Here are letters to Cyril the patriarch. He will love thee for my sake: and for thine own sake, too, I trust. Thou goest of our free will as well as thine own. The

abbot and I have watched thee long, knowing that the Lord had need of such as thee elsewhere. We did but prove thee, to see by thy readiness to obey, whether thou wert fit to rule. Go, and God be with thee. Covet no man's gold or silver. Neither eat flesh nor drink wine, but live as thou hast lived — a Nazarite of the Lord. Fear not the face of man; but look not on the face of woman. In an evil hour came they into the world, the mothers of all mischiefs which I have seen under the sun. Come; the abbot waits for us at the gate."

With tears of surprise, joy, sorrow, almost of dread, Philammon hung back.

"Nay — come. Why shouldst thou break thy brethren's hearts and ours by many leave-takings? Bring from the storehouse a week's provision of dried dates and millet. The papyrus boat lies at the ferry; thou shalt descend in it. The Lord will replace it for us when we need it. Speak with no man on the river, except the monks of God. When thou hast gone five days' journey downward, ask for the mouth of the canal of Alexandria. Once in the city, any monk will guide thee to the archbishop. Send us news of thy welfare by some holy mouth. Come."

Silently they paced together down the glen to the lonely beach of the great stream. Pambo was there already, his white hair glittering in the rising moon, as with slow and feeble arms he launched the light canoe. Philammon flung himself at the old men's feet, and besought, with many tears, their forgiveness and their blessing.

"We have nothing to forgive. Follow thou thine inward call. If it be of the flesh, it will avenge itself;

if it be of the Spirit, who are we that we should fight against God? Farewell."

A few minutes more, and the youth and his canoe were lessening down the rapid stream in the golden summer twilight. Again a minute, and the swift southern night had fallen, and all was dark, but the cold glare of the moon on the river, and on the rockfaces, and on the two old men, as they knelt upon the beach, and with their heads upon each other's shoulders, like two children, sobbed and prayed together for the lost darling of their age.

CHAPTER II.

The Dying World.

In the upper story of a house in the Museum-street of Alexandria, built and fitted up on the old Athenian model, was a small room. It had been chosen by its occupant, not merely on account of its quiet; for though it was tolerably out of hearing of the female slaves who worked, and chattered, and quarrelled under the cloisters of the women's court on the south side, yet it was exposed to the rattle of carriages and the voices of passengers in the fashionable street below, and to strange bursts of roaring, squealing, and trumpeting from the Menagerie, a short way off, on the opposite side of the street. The attraction of the situation lay, perhaps, in the view which it commanded over the wall of the Museum gardens, of flower-beds, shrubberies, fountains, statues, walks, and alcoves, which had echoed for nearly seven hundred years to the wisdom of the Alexandrian sages and poets. School after school, they had all walked, and taught and sung there, beneath the spreading planes and chestnuts, figs and palm-trees. The place seemed fragrant with all the riches of Greek thought and song, since the days when Ptolemy Philadelphus walked there with Euclid and Theocritus, Callimachus and Lycophron.

On the left of the garden stretched the lofty eastern front of the Museum itself, with its picture-galleries,

halls of statuary, dining-halls, and lecture-rooms; one huge wing containing that famous library, founded by the father of Philadelphus, which held in the time of Seneca, even after the destruction of a great part of it in Cæsar's siege, four hundred thousand manuscripts. There it towered up, the wonder of the world, its white roof bright against the rainless blue; and beyond it, among the ridges and pediments of noble buildings, a broad glimpse of the bright blue sea.

The room was fitted up in the purest Greek style, not without an affectation of archaism, in the severe forms and subdued half-tints of the frescoes which ornamented the walls with scenes from the old myths of Athene. Yet the general effect, even under the blazing sun which poured in through the mosquito nets of the court-yard windows, was one of exquisite coolness, and cleanliness, and repose. The room had neither carpet nor fireplace; and the only moveables in it were a sofa-bed, a table, and an arm-chair, all of such delicate and graceful forms, as may be seen on ancient vases of a far earlier period than that whereof we write. But, most probably, had any of us entered that room that morning, we should not have been able to spare a look either for the furniture, or the general effect, or the Museum gardens, or the sparkling Mediterranean beyond; but we should have agreed that the room was quite rich enough for human eyes, for the sake of one treasure which it possessed, and, beside which, nothing was worth a moment's glance. For in the light arm-chair, reading a manuscript which lay on the table, sat a woman, of some five-and-twenty years, evidently the tutelary goddess of that little shrine, dressed, in perfect keeping with the archaism of the chamber, in a simple

old snow-white Ionic robe, falling to the feet and reaching to the throat, and of that peculiarly severe and graceful fashion in which the upper part of the dress falls downward again from the neck to the waist in a sort of cape, entirely hiding the outline of the bust, while it leaves the arms and the point of the shoulders bare. Her dress was entirely without ornament, except the two narrow purple stripes down the front, which marked her rank as a Roman citizen, the gold-embroidered shoes upon her feet, and the gold net, which looped back from her forehead to her neck, hair the colour and gloss of which were hardly distinguishable from that of the metal itself, such as Athene herself might have envied for tint, and mass, and ripple. Her features, arms, and hands were of the severest and grandest type of old Greek beauty, at once showing everywhere the high development of the bones, and covering them with that firm, round, ripe outline, and waxy morbidezza of skin, which the old Greeks owed to their continual use, not only of the bath and muscular exercise, but also of daily unguents. There might have seemed to us too much sadness in that clear grey eye; too much self-conscious restraint in those sharp curved lips; too much affectation in the studied severity of her posture as she read, copied, as it seemed, from some old vase or bas-relief. But the glorious grace and beauty of every line of face and figure would have excused, even hidden those defects, and we should have only recognised the marked resemblance to the ideal portraits of Athene, which adorned every panel of the walls.

She has lifted her eyes off her manuscript; she is looking out with kindling countenance over the gar-

dens of the Museum; her ripe curling Greek lips, such as we never see now, even among our own wives and sisters, open. She is talking to herself. Listen!

"Yes. The statues there are broken. The libraries are plundered. The alcoves are silent. The oracles are dumb. And yet — who says that the old faith of heroes and sages is dead? The beautiful can never die. If the gods have deserted their oracles, they have not deserted the souls who aspire to them. If they have ceased to guide nations, they have not ceased to speak to their own elect. If they have cast off the vulgar herd, they have not cast off Hypatia.

* * * * *

"Ay. To believe in the old creeds, while every one else is dropping away from them. . . . To believe in spite of disappointments. . . . To hope against hope. . . . To show oneself superior to the herd, by seeing boundless depths of living glory in myths which have become dark and dead to them. . . . To struggle to the last against the new and vulgar superstitions of a rotting age, for the faith of my forefathers, for the old gods, the old heroes, the old sages who gauged the mysteries of heaven and earth — and perhaps to conquer — at least to have my reward! To be welcomed into the celestial ranks of the heroic — to rise to the immortal gods, to the ineffable powers, onward, upward ever, through ages and through eternities, till I find my home at last, and vanish in the glory of the Nameless and the Absolute One! . . ."

And her whole face flashed out into wild glory, and then sank again suddenly into a shudder of something like fear and disgust, as she saw, watching her

from under the wall of the gardens opposite, a crooked, withered Jewish crone, dressed out in the most gorgeous and fantastic style of barbaric finery.

"Why does that old hag haunt me? I see her everywhere — till the last month at least — and here she is again! I will ask the prefect to find out who she is, and get rid of her, before she fascinates me with that evil eye. Thank the gods, there she moves away! Foolish! — foolish of me, a philosopher. I, to believe, against the authority of Porphyry himself, too, in evil eyes and magic! But there is my father, pacing up and down in the library."

As she spoke, the old man entered from the next room. He was a Greek also, but of a more common, and, perhaps, lower type; dark and fiery, thin and graceful; his delicate figure and cheeks, wasted by meditation, harmonized well with the staid and simple philosophic cloak which he wore as a sign of his profession. He paced impatiently up and down the chamber, while his keen, glittering eyes and restless gestures betokened intense inward thought. . . .

. . . . "I have it. . . . . No; again it escapes — it contradicts itself. Miserable man that I am! If there is faith in Pythagoras, the symbol should be an expanding series of the powers of three; and yet that accursed binary factor will introduce itself. Did not you work the sum out once, Hypatia?"

"Sit down, my dear father, and eat. You have tasted no food yet this day."

"What do I care for food! The inexpressible must be expressed. The work must be done, if it cost me the squaring of the circle. How can he,

whose sphere lies above the stars, stoop every moment to earth?"

"Ay," she answered, half bitterly, "and would that we could live without food, and imitate perfectly the immortal gods. But while we are in this prison-house of matter, we must wear our chain; even wear it gracefully, if we have the good taste; and make the base necessities of this body of shame symbolic of the diviner food of the reason. There is fruit, with lentils and rice, waiting for you in the next room; and bread, unless you despise it too much."

"The food of slaves!" he answered. "Well, I will eat, and be ashamed of eating. Stay, did I tell you? Six new pupils in the mathematical school this morning. It grows! It spreads! We shall conquer yet!"

She sighed. "How do you know that they have not come to you, as Critias and Alcibiades did to Socrates, to learn a merely political and mundane virtue? Strange! that men should be content to grovel, and be men, when they might rise to the rank of gods! Ah, my father! that is my bitterest grief; to see those who have been pretending in the morning lecture-room to worship every word of mine as an oracle, lounging in the afternoon round Pelagia's litter; and then at night — for I know that they do it — the dice, and the wine, and worse. That Pallas herself should be conquered every day by Venus Pandemos! That Pelagia should have more power than I! Not that such a creature as that disturbs me: no created thing, I hope, can move my equanimity; but if I could stoop to hate — I should hate her — hate her."

And her voice took a tone which made it somewhat uncertain whether, in spite of all the lofty impassibility which she felt bound to possess, she did not hate Pelagia with a most human and mundane hatred.

But at that moment the conversation was cut short by the hasty entrance of a slave-girl, who, with fluttering voice, announced —

"His excellency, madam, the prefect! His chariot has been at the gate for these five minutes, and he is now coming up stairs."

"Foolish child!" answered Hypatia, with some affectation of indifference. "And why should that disturb me? Let him enter."

The door opened, and in came, preceded by the scent of half-a-dozen different perfumes, a florid, delicate-featured man, gorgeously dressed out in senatorial costume, his fingers and neck covered with jewels.

"The representative of the Cæsars honours himself by offering at the shrine of Athene Polias, and rejoices to see in her priestess as lovely a likeness as ever of the goddess whom she serves. . . . . Don't betray me, but I really cannot help talking sheer paganism whenever I find myself within the influence of your eyes."

"Truth is mighty," said Hypatia, as she rose to greet him with a smile and a reverence.

"Ah, so they say — Your excellent father has vanished. He is really too modest — honest, though — about his incapacity for state secrets. After all, you know it was your Minervaship which I came to con-

sult. How has this turbulent Alexandrian rascaldom been behaving itself in my absence?"

"The herd has been eating, and drinking, and marrying, as usual, I believe," answered Hypatia, in a languid tone.

"And multiplying, I don't doubt. Well, there will be less loss to the empire if I have to crucify a dozen or two, as I positively will, the next riot. It is really a great comfort to a statesman, that the masses are so well aware that they deserve hanging, and therefore so careful to prevent any danger of public justice depopulating the province. But how go on the schools?"

Hypatia shook her head sadly.

"Ah, boys will be boys. . . . . I plead guilty myself. Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor. You must not be hard on us. . . . . Whether we obey you or not in private life, we do in public; and if we enthrone you queen of Alexandria, you must allow your courtiers and body-guards a few court licences. Now don't sigh, or I shall be inconsolable. At all events, your worst rival has betaken herself to the wilderness, and gone to look for the city of the gods above the cataracts."

"Whom do you mean?" asked Hypatia, in a tone most unphilosophically eager.

"Pelagia, of course. I met that prettiest and naughtiest of humanities halfway between here and Thebes, transformed into a perfect Andromache of chaste affection."

"And to whom, pray?"

"To a certain Gothic giant. What men those bar-

barians do breed! I was afraid of being crushed under the elephant's foot at every step I took with him!"

"What!" asked Hypatia, "did your excellency condescend to converse with such savages?"

"To tell you the truth, he had some forty stout countrymen of his with him, who might have been troublesome to a perplexed prefect; not to mention that it is always as well to keep on good terms with these Goths. Really, after the sack of Rome, and Athens cleaned out like a beehive by wasps, things begin to look serious. And as for the great brute himself, he has rank enough, in his way, — boasts of his descent from some cannibal god or other, — really hardly deigned to speak to a paltry Roman governor, till his faithful and adoring bride interceded for me. Still, the fellow understood good living, and we celebrated our new treaty of friendship with noble libations — but I must not talk about that to you. However, I got rid of them; quoted all the geographical lies I had ever heard, and a great many more; quickened their appetite for their fool's errand notably, and started them off again. So now the star of Venus is set, and that of Pallas in the ascendant. Wherefore tell me — what am I to do with Saint Firebrand?"

"Cyril?"

"Cyril."

"Justice."

"Ah, Fairest Wisdom, don't mention that horrid word out of the lecture-room. In theory it is all very well; but in poor imperfect earthly practice, a governor must be content with doing very much what comes to hand. In abstract justice, now, I ought to

nail up Cyril, deacons, district visitors, and all, in a row, on the sand-hills outside. That is simple enough; but, like a great many simple and excellent things, impossible."

"You fear the people?"

"Well, my dear lady, and has not the villanous demagogue got the whole mob on his side? Am I to have the Constantinople riots re-enacted here? I really cannot face it; I have not nerve for it; perhaps I am too lazy. Be it so."

Hypatia sighed. "Ah, that your excellency but saw the great duel, which depends on you alone! Do not fancy that the battle is merely between Paganism and Christianity —"

"Why, if it were, you know, I, as a Christian, under a Christian and sainted emperor, not to mention his august sister —"

"We understand," interrupted she, with an impatient wave of her beautiful hand. "Not even between them; not even between philosophy and barbarianism. The struggle is simply one between the aristocracy and the mob, — between wealth, refinement, art, learning, all that makes a nation great, and the savage herd of child-breeders below, the many ignoble, who were meant to labour for the noble few. Shall the Roman empire command or obey her own slaves? is the question which you and Cyril have to battle out; and the fight must be internecine."

"I should not wonder if it became so, really," answered the prefect, with a shrug of his shoulders. "I expect, every time I ride, to have my brains knocked out by some mad monk."

"Why not? In an age when, as has been well and

often said, emperors and consulars crawl to the tombs of a tent-maker and a fisherman, and kiss the mouldy bones of the vilest slaves? Why not, among a people whose God is the crucified son of a carpenter? Why should learning, authority, antiquity, birth, rank, the system of empire which has been growing up, fed by the accumulated wisdom of ages, — why, I say, should any of these things protect your life a moment from the fury of any beggar who believes that the Son of God died for him as much as for you, and that he is your equal, if not your superior, in the sight of his low-born and illiterate deity?" *

"My most eloquent philosopher, this may be — and perhaps is — all very true. I quite agree that there are very great practical inconveniences of this kind in the new — I mean, the catholic faith; but the world is full of inconveniences. The wise man does not quarrel with his creed for being disagreeable, any more than he does with his finger for aching: he cannot help it, and must make the best of a bad matter. Only tell me how to keep the peace."

"And let philosophy be destroyed?"

"That it never will be, as long as Hypatia lives to illuminate the earth; and, as far as I am concerned, I promise you a clear stage and — a great deal of favour; as is proved by my visiting you publicly at this moment, before I have given audience to one of the four hundred bores, great and small, who are waiting in the tribunal to torment me. Do help me and advise me. What am I to do?"

* These are the arguments and the language which were commonly employed by Porphyry, Julian, and the other opponents of Christianity.

"I have told you."

"Ah, yes, as to general principles. But out of the lecture-room I prefer a practical expedient: for instance, Cyril writes to me here — plague on him! he would not let me even have a week's hunting in peace — that there is a plot on the part of the Jews to murder all the Christians. Here is the precious document — do look at it, in pity. For aught I know or care, the plot may be an exactly opposite one, and the Christians intend to murder all the Jews. But I must take some notice of the letter."

"I do not see that, your excellency."

"Why, if anything did happen, after all, conceive the missives which would be sent flying off to Constantinople against me!"

"Let them go. If you are secure in the consciousness of innocence, what matter?"

"Consciousness of innocence! I shall lose my prefecture!"

"Your danger would be just as great if you took notice of it. Whatever happened, you would be accused of favouring the Jews."

"And really there might be some truth in the accusation. How the finances of the province would go on without their kind assistance, I dare not think. If those Christians would but lend me their money, instead of building almshouses and hospitals with it, they might burn the Jews' quarter to-morrow for aught I care. But now...."

"But now, you must absolutely take no notice of this letter. The very tone of it forbids you, for your own honour, and the honour of the empire. Are you to treat with a man who talks of the masses of Alexandria

as 'the flock whom the King of kings has committed to his rule and care?' Does your excellency, or this proud bishop, govern Alexandria?"

"Really, my dear lady, I have given up inquiring."

"But he has not. He comes to you as a person possessing an absolute authority over two-thirds of the population, which he does not scruple to hint to you is derived from a higher source than your own. The consequence is clear. If it be from a higher source than yours, of course it ought to control yours; and you will confess that it ought to control it — you will acknowledge the root and ground of every extravagant claim which he makes, if you deign to reply."

"But I must say something, or I shall be pelted in the streets. You philosophers, however raised above your own bodies you may be, must really not forget that we poor worldlings have bones to be broken."

"Then tell him, and by word of mouth merely, that as the information which he sends you comes from his private knowledge, and concerns not him as bishop, but you as magistrate, you can only take it into consideration when he addresses you as a private person, laying a regular information at your tribunal."

"Charming! queen of diplomatists as well as philosophers! I go to obey you. Ah! why were you not Pulcheria? No, for then Alexandria had been dark, and Orestes missed the supreme happiness of kissing a hand which Pallas, when she made you, must have borrowed from the workshop of Aphrodite."

"Recollect that you are a Christian," answered Hypatia, half smiling.

So the prefect departed; and passing through the outer hall, which was already crowded with Hypatia's

aristocratic pupils and visitors, bowed his way out past them, and regained his chariot, chuckling over the rebuff which he intended to administer to Cyril, and comforting himself with the only text of Scripture of the inspiration of which he was thoroughly convinced—"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

At the door was a crowd of chariots, slaves with their masters' parasols, and the rabble of on-looking boys and market-folk, as usual in Alexandria then, as in all great cities since, who were staring at the prefect, and having their heads rapped by his guards, and wondering what sort of glorious personage Hypatia might be, and what sort of glorious house she must live in, to be fit company for the great governor of Alexandria. Not that there was not many a sulky and lowering face among the mob, for the great majority of them were Christians, and very seditious and turbulent politicians, as Alexandrians, "men of Macedonia," were bound to be; and there was many a grumble among them, all but audible, at the prefect's going in state to the heathen woman's house — heathen sorceress, some pious old women called her — before he heard any poor soul's petition in the tribunal, or even said his prayers in church.

Just as he was stepping into his curricle, a tall young man, as gorgeously bedizened as himself, lounged down the steps after him, and beckoned lazily to the black boy who carried his parasol.

"Ah, Raphael Aben-Ezra! my excellent friend, what propitious deity — ahem! martyr — brings you to Alexandria just as I want you! Get up by my side, and let us have a chat on our way to the tribunal."

The man addressed came slowly forward with an

ostentatiously low salutation, which could not hide, and indeed was not intended to hide, the contemptuous and lazy expression of his face; and asked, in a drawling tone —

"And for what kind purpose does the representative of the Cæsars bestow such an honour on the humblest of his, &c. &c. — your penetration will supply the rest."

"Don't be frightened; I am not going to borrow money of you," answered Orestes, laughingly, as the Jew got into the curricle.

"I am glad to hear it. Really one usurer in a family is enough. My father made the gold, and if I spend it, I consider that I do all that is required of a philosopher."

"A charming team of white Nisæans, is not this? And only one grey hoof among all the four."

"Yes .... horses are a bore, I begin to find, like everything else. Always falling sick, or running away, or breaking one's peace of mind in some way or other. Besides, I have been pestered out of my life there in Cyrene, by commissions for dogs and horses and bows from that old episcopal Nimrod, Synesius."

"What, is the worthy man as lively as ever?"

"Lively? He nearly drove me into a nervous fever in three days. Up at four in the morning, always in the most disgustingly good health and spirits, farming, coursing, shooting, riding over hedge and ditch after rascally black robbers; preaching, intriguing, borrowing money; baptizing and excommunicating; bullying that bully, Andronicus; comforting old women, and giving pretty girls dowries; scribbling one half-hour on philosophy, and the next on farriery; sitting up all night

writing hymns and drinking strong liquors; off again on horseback at four the next morning; and talking by the hour all the while about philosophic abstraction from the mundane tempest. Heaven defend me from all two-legged whirlwinds! By the by, there was a fair daughter of my nation came back to Alexandria in the same ship with me, with a cargo that may suit your highness."

"There are a great many fair daughters of your nation who might suit me, without any cargo at all."

"Ah, they have had good practice, the little fools, ever since the days of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. But I mean old Miriam — you know. She has been lending Synesius money to fight the black fellows with; and really it was high time. They had burnt every homestead for miles through the province. But the daring old girl must do a little business for herself; so she went off, in the teeth of the barbarians, right away to the Atlas, bought all their lady prisoners, and some of their own sons and daughters, too, of them, for beads and old iron; and has come back with as pretty a cargo of Libyan beauties as a prefect of good taste could wish to have the first choice of. You may thank me for that privilege."

"After, of course, you had suited yourself, my cunning Raphael?"

"Not I. Women are bores, as Solomon found out long ago. Did I never tell you? I began, as he did, with the most select harem in Alexandria. But they quarrelled so, that one day I went out, and sold them all but one, who was a Jewess — so there were objections on the part of the Rabbis. Then I tried one, as Solomon did; but my 'garden shut up,' and my 'sealed fountain' wanted me to be always in love with

her, so I went to the lawyers, allowed her a comfortable maintenance, and now I am as free as a monk, and shall be happy to give your excellency the benefit of any good taste or experience which I may possess."

"Thanks, worthy Jew. We are not yet as exalted as yourself, and will send for the old Erictho this very afternoon. Now listen a moment to base, earthly, and political business. Cyril has written to me, to say that you Jews have plotted to murder all the Christians."

"Well — why not? I most heartily wish it were true, and think, on the whole, that it very probably is so."

"By the immortal — saints, man! you are not serious?"

"The four archangels forbid! It is no concern of mine. All I say is, that my people are great fools, like the rest of the world; and have, for aught I know or care, some such intention. They won't succeed, of course; and that is all you have to care for. But if you think it worth the trouble — which I do not — I shall have to go to the synagogue on business in a week or so, and then I would ask some of the Rabbis."

"Laziest of men! — and I must answer Cyril this very day."

"An additional reason for asking no questions of our people. Now you can honestly say that you know nothing about the matter."

"Well, after all, ignorance is a stronghold for poor statesmen. So you need not hurry yourself."

"I assure your excellency I will not."

"Ten days hence, or so, you know."

"Exactly, after it is all over."

"And can't be helped. What a comfort it is, now and then, that Can't be helped!"

"It is the root and marrow of all philosophy. Your practical man, poor wretch, will try to help this and that, and torment his soul with ways and means, and preventives and forestallings: your philosopher quietly says — It can't be helped. If it ought to be, it will be: if it is, it ought to be. We did not make the world, and we are not responsible for it. — There is the sum and substance of all true wisdom, and the epitome of all that has been said and written thereon, from Philo the Jew to Hypatia the Gentile. By the way, here's Cyril coming down the steps of the Cæsareum. A very handsome fellow, after all, though he is looking as sulky as a bear."

"With his cubs at his heels. What a scoundrelly visage that tall fellow — deacon, or reader, or whatever he is by his dress — has."

"There they are — whispering together. Heaven give them pleasant thoughts and pleasanter faces!"

"Amen!" quoth Orestes, with a sneer: and he would have said Amen in good earnest, had he been able to take the liberty — which we shall — and listen to Cyril's answer to Peter, the tall reader.

"From Hypatia's, you say? Why, he only returned to the city this morning."

"I saw his four-in-hand standing at her door, as I came down the Museum-street hither, half-an-hour ago."

"And twenty carriages besides, I don't doubt?"

"The street was blocked up with them. There! Look round the corner now. — Chariots, litters, slaves, and fops. — When shall we see such a concourse as that where it ought to be?"

Cyril made no answer; and Peter went on — "Where it ought to be, my father — in front of your door at the Serapeium?"

"The world, the flesh, and the devil know their own, Peter: and as long as they have their own to go to, we cannot expect them to come to us."

"But what if their own were taken out of the way?"

"They might come to us for want of better amusement .... devil and all. Well — if I could get a fair hold of the two first, I would take the third into the bargain, and see what could be done with him. But never, while these lecture-rooms last — these Egyptian chambers of imagery — these theatres of Satan, where the devil transforms himself into an angel of light, and apes Christian virtue, and bedizens his ministers like ministers of righteousness, as long as that lecture-room stands, and the great and the powerful flock to it, to learn excuses for their own tyrannies and atheisms, so long will the kingdom of God be trampled under foot in Alexandria; so long will the princes of this world, with their gladiators, and parasites, and money-lenders, be masters here, and not the bishops and priests of the living God."

It was now Peter's turn to be silent; and as the two, with their little knot of district-visitors behind them, walk moodily along the great esplanade which overlooked the harbour, and then vanish suddenly up some dingy alley into the crowded misery of the sailors' quarter, we will leave them to go about their errand of mercy, and, like fashionable people, keep to the grand parade, and listen again to our two fashionable friends in the carved and gilded curricle with four white blood-horses.

"A fine sparkling breeze outside the Pharos, Raphael — fair for the wheat-ships too."

"Are they gone yet?"

"Yes — why? I sent the first fleet off three days go; and the rest are clearing outwards to-day."

"Oh — ah — so! — Then you have not heard from Ieraclian?"

"Heraclian? What the — blessed saints has the ount of Africa to do with my wheat-ships?"

"Oh, nothing. It's no business of mine. Only he going to rebel. . . . But here we are at your door."

"To what?" asked Orestes, in a horrified tone.

"To rebel, and attack Rome."

"Good gods — God I mean! A fresh bore! Come , and tell a poor miserable slave of a governor — eak low, for heaven's sake! — I hope these rascally ooms haven't overheard you."

"Easy to throw them into the canal, if they have," uoth Raphael, as he walked coolly through hall and rridor after the perturbed governor.

Poor Orestes never stopped till he reached a little amber of the inner court, beckoned the Jew in after m, locked the door, threw himself into an arm-chair, t his hands on his knees, and sat, bending forward, aring into Raphael's face with a ludicrous terror and rplexity.

"Tell me all about it. Tell me this instant!"

"I have told you all I know," quoth Raphael, ietly seating himself on a sofa, and playing with a welled dagger. "I thought, of course, that you were the secret, or I should have said nothing. It's no siness of mine, you know."

Orestes, like most weak and luxurious men, Romans

especially, had a wild-beast vein in him — and it burst forth.

"Hell and the furies! You insolent provincial slave — you will carry these liberties of yours too far! Do you know who I am, you accursed Jew! Tell me the whole truth, or, by the head of the emperor, I'll twist it out of you with red-hot pincers!"

Raphael's countenance assumed a dogged expression, which showed that the old Jewish blood still beat true, under all its affected shell of Neo-Platonist nonchalance; and there was a quiet unpleasant earnest in his smile, as he answered —

"Then, my dear governor, you will be the first man on earth who ever yet forced a Jew to say or do what he did not choose."

"We'll see!" yelled Orestes. "Here, slaves!" And he clapped his hands loudly.

"Calm yourself, your excellency," quoth Raphael, rising. "The door is locked; the mosquito net is across the window; and this dagger is poisoned. If anything happens to me, you will offend all the Jew money-lenders, and die in about three days in a great deal of pain, having missed our assignation with old Miriam, lost your pleasantest companion, and left your own finances and those of the prefecture in a considerable state of embarrassment. How much better to sit down, hear all I have to say philosophically, like a true pupil of Hypatia, and not expect a man to tell you what he really does not know."

Orestes, after looking vainly round the room for a place to escape, had quietly subsided into his chair again; and by the time that the slaves knocked at the

door, he had so far recovered his philosophy as to ask, not for the torturers, but for a page and wine.

"Oh, you Jews!" quoth he, trying to laugh off matters. "The same incarnate fiends that Titus found you!"

"The very same, my dear prefect. Now for this matter, which is really important — at least to Gentiles. Heraclian will certainly rebel. Synesius let out as much to me. He has fitted out an armament for Ostia, stopped his own wheat-ships, and is going to write to you to stop yours, and to starve out the Eternal City, Goths, senate, emperor, and all. Whether you will comply with his reasonable little request depends of course on yourself."

"And that, again, very much on his plans."

"Of course. You cannot be expected to — we will euphemize — unless it be made worth your while."

Orestes sat buried in deep thought.

"Of course not," said he at last, half unconsciously. And then, in sudden dread of having committed himself, he looked up fiercely at the Jew.

"And how do I know that this is not some infernal trap of yours? Tell me how you found out all this, or by Hercules (he had quite forgotten his Christianity by this time) — by Hercules and the Twelve Gods, I'll —"

"Don't use expressions unworthy of a philosopher. My source of information was very simple and very good. He has been negotiating a loan from the Rabbis at Carthage. They were either frightened, or loyal, or both, and hung back. He knew — as all wise governors know when they allow themselves time — that it is no use to bully a Jew; and applied to me. I

never lend money — it is unphilosophical: but I introduced him to old Miriam, who dare do business with the devil himself; and by that move, whether he has the money or not, I cannot tell: but this I can tell, that we have his secret — and so have you now; and if you want more information, the old woman, who enjoys an intrigue as much as she does Falernian, will get it you."

"Well, you are a true friend, after all."

"Of course I am. Now, is not this method of getting at the truth much easier and pleasanter than setting a couple of dirty negroes to pinch and pull me, and so making it a point of honour with me to tell you nothing but lies? Here comes Ganymede with the wine, just in time to calm your nerves, and fill you with the spirit of divination. . . . . To the goddess of good counsels, my lord! What wine this is!"

"True Syrian — fire and honey; fourteen years old next vintage, my Raphael. Out, Hypocorisma! See that he is not listening. The impudent rascal! I was humbugged into giving two thousand gold pieces for him two years ago, he was so pretty — they said he was only just rising thirteen — and he has been the plague of my life ever since, and is beginning to want the barber already. Now, what is the count dreaming of?"

"His wages for killing Stilicho."

"What, is it not enough to be Count of Africa?"

"I suppose he sets off against that his services during the last three years."

"Well, he saved Africa."

"And thereby Egypt also. And you, too, as well as the emperor, may be considered as owing him somewhat."

"My good friend, my debts are far too numerous

for me to think of paying any of them. But what wages does he want?"

"The purple."

Orestes started, and then fell into thought. Raphael sat watching him a while.

"Now, most noble lord, may I depart? I have said all I have to say; and unless I get home to luncheon at once, I shall hardly have time to find old Miriam for you, and get through our little affair with her before sunset."

"Stay. What force has he?"

"Forty thousand already, they say. And those Donatist ruffians are with him to a man, if he can but scrape together wherewith to change their bludgeons into good steel."

"Well, go. . . . . So. A hundred thousand might do it," said he, meditating, as Raphael bowed himself out. "He won't get them. I don't know, though; the man has the head of a Julius. Well — that fool Attalus talked of joining Egypt to the Western Empire . . . . Not such a bad thought either. Anything is better than being governed by an idiot child and three canting nuns. I expect to be excommunicated every day for some offence against Pulcheria's prudery. . . . . Heraclian emperor at Rome . . . . and I lord and master on this side the sea . . . . the Donatists pitted again fairly against the orthodox, to cut each other's throats in peace . . . no more of Cyril's spying and tale-bearing to Constantinople. . . . . Not such a bad dish of fare . . . . But then — it would take so much trouble!"

With which words, Orestes went into his third warm bath for that day.

CHAPTER III.

The Goths.

For two days the young monk held on, paddling and floating rapidly down the Nile-stream, leaving city after city to right and left with longing eyes, and looking back to one villa after another, till the reaches of the banks hid them from his sight, with many a yearning to know what sort of places those gay buildings and gardens would look like on a nearer view, and what sort of life the thousands led who crowded the busy quays, and walked and drove, in an endless stream, along the great high roads which ran along either bank. He carefully avoided every boat that passed him, from the gilded barge of the wealthy landlord or merchant, to the tiny raft buoyed up with empty jars, which was floating down to be sold at some market in the Delta. Here and there he met and hailed a crew of monks, drawing their nets in a quiet bay, or passing along the great watery highway from monastery to monastery: but all the news he received from them was, that the canal of Alexandria was still several days' journey below him. It seemed endless, that monotonous vista of the two high clay banks, with their sluices and water-wheels, their knots of palms and date-trees; endless seemed that wearisome succession of bars of sand and banks of mud, every one like the one before it, every one dotted with the same line of

logs and stones strewn along the water's edge, which turned out, as he approached them, to be basking crocodiles and sleeping pelicans. His eye, wearied with the continual confinement and want of distance, longed for the boundless expanse of the desert, for the jagged outlines of those far-off hills, which he had watched from boyhood rising mysteriously at morn out of the eastern sky, and melting mysteriously into it again at even, beyond which dwelt a whole world of wonders, elephants and dragons, satyrs and anthropophagi, — ay, and the phœnix itself. Tired and melancholy, his mind returned inward to prey on itself, and the last words of Arsenius rose again and again to his thought. "Was his call of the spirit or of the flesh?" How should he test that problem? He wished to see the world . . . that might be carnal. True; but he wished to convert the world . . . was not that spiritual? Was he not going on a noble errand? . . . thirsting for toil, for saintship, for martyrdom itself, if it would but come and cut the Gordian knot of all temptations, and save him — for he dimly felt that it would save him — a whole sea of trouble in getting safe and triumphant out of that world into which he had not yet entered . . . and his heart shrunk back from the untried homeless wilderness before him. But no! the die was cast, and he must down and onward, whether in obedience to the spirit or the flesh. Oh, for one hour of the quiet of that dear Laura and the old familiar faces!

At last, a sudden turn of the bank brought him in sight of a gaudily painted barge, on board of which armed men, in uncouth and foreign dresses, were chasing with barbaric shouts some large object in the water. In the bows stood a man of gigantic stature,

brandishing a harpoon in his right, and in his left holding the line of a second, the head of which was fixed in the huge purple sides of a hippopotamus, who foamed and wallowed a few yards down the stream. An old grizzled warrior at the stern, with a rudder in either hand, kept the boat's head continually towards the monster, in spite of its sudden and frantic wheelings; and when it dashed madly across the stream, some twenty oars flashed through the water in pursuit. All was activity and excitement; and it was no wonder if Philammon's curiosity had tempted him to drift down almost abreast of the barge, ere he descried, peeping from under a decorated awning in the after-part, some dozen pair of languishing black eyes, turned alternately to the game and to himself. The serpents! — chattering and smiling, with pretty little shrieks and shaking of glossy curls and gold necklaces, and fluttering of muslin dresses, within a dozen yards of him! Blushing scarlet, he knew not why, he seized his paddle, and tried to back out of the snare . . . but somehow, his very efforts to escape those sparkling eyes diverted his attention from everything else: the hippopotamus had caught sight of him, and furious with pain, rushed straight at the unoffending canoe; the harpoon line became entangled round his body, and in a moment he and his frail bark were overturned, and the monster, with his huge white tusks gaping wide, close on him as he struggled in the stream.

Luckily, Philammon, contrary to the wont of monks, was a bather, and swam like a water-fowl, fear he had never known; death from childhood had been to him, as to the other inmates of the Laura, a contemplation too perpetual to have any paralyzing terror in it, even

then, when life seemed just about to open on him anew. But the monk was a man, and a young one, and had no intention of dying tamely or unavenged. In an instant he had freed himself from the line; drawn the short knife which was his only weapon; and diving suddenly, avoided the monster's rush, and attacked him from behind with stabs, which, though not deep, still dyed the waters with gore at every stroke. The barbarians shouted with delight. The hippopotamus turned furiously against his new assailant, crushing, alas! the empty canoe to fragments with a single snap of his enormous jaws; but the turn was fatal to him; the barge was close upon him, and as he presented his broad side to the blow, the sinewy arm of the giant drove a harpoon through his heart, and with one convulsive shudder the huge blue mass turned over on its side and floated dead.

Poor Philammon! He alone was silent, amid the yells of triumph; sorrowfully he swam round and round his little paper wreck . . . it would not have floated a mouse. Wistfully he eyed the distant banks, half minded to strike out for them and escape, . . . and thought of the crocodiles, . . . and paddled round again, . . . and thought of the basilisk eyes, . . . he might escape the crocodiles, but who could escape women?... and he struck out valiantly for shore . . . when he was brought to a sudden stop by finding the stem of the barge close on him, a noose thrown over him by some friendly barbarian, and himself hauled on board, amid the laughter, praise, astonishment, and grumbling of the good-natured crew, who had expected him, as a matter of course, to avail himself at once of their

help, and could not conceive the cause of his reluctance.

Philammon gazed with wonder on his strange hosts, their pale complexions, globular heads and faces, high cheek-bones, tall and sturdy figures; their red beards, and yellow hair knotted fantastically above the head; their awkward dresses, half Roman or Egyptian, and half of foreign fur, soiled and stained in many a storm and fight, but tastelessly bedizened with classic jewels, brooches and Roman coins, strung like necklaces. Only the steersman, who had come forward to wonder at the hippopotamus, and to help in dragging the unwieldy brute on board, seemed to keep genuine and unornamented the costume of his race, the white linen leggings, strapped with thongs of deerskin, the quilted leather cuirass, the bear's fur cloak, the only ornaments of which were the fangs and claws of the beast itself, and a fringe of grizzled tufts, which looked but too like human hair. The language which they spoke was utterly unintelligible to Philammon, though it need not be so to us.

"A well-grown lad and a brave one, Wulf the son of Ovida," said the giant to the old hero of the bearskin cloak; "and understands wearing skins, in this furnace-mouth of a climate, rather better than you do."

"I keep to the dress of my forefathers, Amalric the Amal. What did to sack Rome in, may do to find Asgard in."

The giant, who was decked out with helmet, cuirass, and senatorial boots, in a sort of mongrel mixture of the Roman military and civil dress, his neck

wreathed with a dozen gold chains, and every finger sparkling with jewels, turned away with an impatient sneer.

"Asgard — Asgard? If you are in such a hurry to get to Asgard up this ditch in the sand, you had better ask the fellow how far it is thither."

Wulf took him quietly at his word, and addressed a question to the young monk, which he could only answer by a shake of the head.

"Ask him in Greek, man."

"Greek is a slave's tongue. Make a slave talk to him in it, not me."

"Here — some of you girls! Pelagia! you understand this fellow's talk. Ask him how far it is to Asgard."

"You must ask me more civilly, my rough hero," replied a soft voice from underneath the awning. "Beauty must be sued, and not commanded."

"Come, then, my olive-tree, my gazelle, my lotus-flower, my — what was the last nonsense you taught me? — and ask this wild man of the sands how far it is from these accursed endless rabbit-burrows to Asgard."

The awning was raised, and lying luxuriously on a soft mattress, fanned with peacock's feathers, and glittering with rubies and topazes, appeared such a vision as Philammon had never seen before.

A woman of some two-and-twenty summers, formed in the most voluptuous mould of Grecian beauty, whose complexion showed every violet vein through its skin of luscious brown. Her little bare feet, as they dimpled the cushions, were more perfect than Aphrodite's, softer than a swan's bosom. Every swell of her bust and

arms showed through the thin gauze robe, while her lower limbs were wrapt in a shawl of orange silk, embroidered with wreaths of shells and roses. Her dark hair lay carefully spread out upon the pillow, in a thousand ringlets entwined with gold and jewels; her languishing eyes blazed like diamonds from a cavern, under eyelids darkened and deepened with black antimony; her lips pouted of themselves, by habit or by nature, into a perpetual kiss; slowly she raised one little lazy hand; slowly the ripe lips opened; and in most pure and melodious Attic, she lisped her huge lover's question to the monk, and repeated it before the boy could shake off the spell, and answer . . . .

"Asgard? What is Asgard?"

The beauty looked at the giant for further instructions.

"The City of the immortal Gods," interposed the old warrior, hastily and sternly, to the lady.

"The city of God is in heaven," said Philammon to the interpreter, turning his head away from those gleaming, luscious, searching glances.

His answer was received with a general laugh by all except the leader, who shrugged his shoulders.

"I may as well be up in the skies as up the Nile. We shall be just as likely, I believe, to reach it by flying, as by rowing up this big ditch. Ask him where the river comes from, Pelagia."

Pelagia obeyed . . . . and thereon followed a confusion worse confounded, composed of all the impossible wonders of that mythic fairy-land with which Philammon had gorged himself from boyhood in his walks with the old monks, and of the equally trust-worthy traditions which the Goths had picked up at Alexandria.

There was nothing which that river did not do. It rose in the Caucasus. Where was the Caucasus? He did not know. In Paradise — in Indian Æthiopia — in Æthiopian India. Where were they? He did not know. Nobody knew. It ran for a hundred and fifty days' journey through deserts where nothing but flying serpents and satyrs lived, and the very lions' manes were burnt off by the heat. . . . .

"Good sporting there, at all events, among these dragons," quoth Smid, the son of Troll, armourer to the party.

"As good as Thor's when he caught Snake Midgard with the bullock's head," said Wulf.

It turned to the East for a hundred days' journey more, all round Arabia and India, among forests full of elephants and dog-headed women.

"Better and better, Smid!" growled Wulf, approvingly.

"Fresh beef cheap there, Prince Wulf, eh?" quoth Smid; "I must look over the arrow-heads."

— To the mountains of the Hyperboreans, where there was eternal night, and the air was full of feathers. . . . . That is, one-third of it came from thence, and another third came from the Southern ocean, over the Moon mountains, where no one had ever been, and the remaining third from the country where the phœnix lived, and nobody knew where that was. And then there were the cataracts, and the inundations — and — and — and above the cataracts, nothing but sand-hills and ruins, as full of devils as they could hold . . . . and as for Asgard, no one had ever heard of it . . . . till every face grew longer and longer, as Pelagia went on interpreting and misinter-

preting; and at last the giant smote his hand upon his knee and swore a great oath that Asgard might rot till the twilight of the gods before he went a step farther up the Nile.

"Curse the monk!" growled Wulf. "How should such a poor beast know anything about the matter?"

"Why should not he know as well as that ape of a Roman governor?" asked Smid.

"Oh, the monks know everything," said Pelagia. "They go hundreds and thousands of miles up the river, and cross the deserts among fiends and monsters, where any one else would be eaten up, or go mad at once."

"Ah, the dear holy men! It's all by the sign of the blessed cross!" exclaimed all the girls together, devoutly crossing themselves, while two or three of the most enthusiastic were half-minded to go forward and kneel to Philammon for his blessing; but hesitated, their Gothic lovers being heathenishly stupid and prudish on such points.

"Why should he not know as well as the Prefect? Well said, Smid! I believe that Prefect's quilldriver was humbugging us when he said Asgard was only ten days' sail up."

"Why?" asked Wulf.

"I never give any reasons. What's the use of being an Amal, and a son of Odin, if one has always to be giving reasons like a rascally Roman lawyer? I say the governor looked like a liar; and I say this monk looks like an honest fellow; and I choose to believe him, and there's an end of it."

"Don't look so cross at me, Prince Wulf; I'm sure

it's not my fault; I could only say what the monk told me," whispered poor Pelagia.

"Who looks cross at you, my queen?" roared the Amal. "Let me have him out here, and by Thor's hammer, I'll —"

"Who spoke to you, you stupid darling?" answered Pelagia, who lived in hourly fear of thunderstorms. "Who is going to be cross with any one, except I with you, for mishearing, and misunderstanding, and meddling, as you are always doing? I shall do as I threatened, and run away with Prince Wulf, if you are not good. Don't you see that the whole crew are expecting you to make them an oration?"

Whereupon the Amal rose.

"See you here, Wulf, the son of Ovida, and warriors all! If we want wealth, we sha'n't find it among the sand-hills. If we want women, we shall find nothing prettier than these among dragons and devils. Don't look angry, Wulf. You have no mind to marry one of those dog-headed girls the monk talked of, have you? Well, then, we have money and women; and if we want sport, it's better sport killing men than killing beasts, so we had better go where we shall find most of that game, which we certainly shall not up this road. As for fame and all that, though I've had enough, there's plenty to be got anywhere along the shores of that Mediterranean. Let's burn and plunder Alexandria: forty of us Goths might kill down all those donkey-riders in two days, and hang up that lying Prefect who sent us here on this fool's errand. Don't answer, Wulf. I knew he was humbugging us all along, but you were so open-mouthed to all he said, that I was bound to let my elders choose for me. Let's

go back; send over for any of the tribes; send to Spain for those Vandals — they have had enough of Adolf by now, curse him! — I'll warrant them; get together an army, and take Constantinople. I'll be Augustus, and Pelagia, Augusta; you and Smid here, the two Cæsars; and we'll make the monk the chief of the eunuchs, eh? — anything you like for a quiet life; but up this accursed kennel of hot water I go no farther. Ask your girls, my heroes, and I'll ask mine. Women are all prophetesses, every one of them."

"When they are not harlots," growled Wulf to himself.

"I will go to the world's end with you, my king!" sighed Pelagia; "but Alexandria is certainly pleasanter than this."

Old Wulf sprang up fiercely enough.

"Hear me, Amalric the Amal, son of Odin, and heroes all! When my fathers swore to be Odin's men, and gave up the kingdom to the holy Amals, the sons of the Æsir, what was the bond between your fathers and mine? Was it not that we should move and move, southward and southward ever, till we came back to Asgard, the city where Odin dwells for ever, and gave into his hands the kingdom of all the earth? And did we not keep our oath? Have we not held to the Amals? Did we not leave Adolf, because we would not follow a Balth, while there was an Amal to lead us? Have we not been true men to you, son of the Æsir?"

"No man ever saw Wulf, the son of Ovida, fail friend for foe."

"Then why does his friend fail him? Why does his friend fail himself? If the bison-bull lie down and

wallow, what will the herd do for leader? If the king-wolf lose the scent, how will the pack hold it? If the Yngling forgets the song of Asgard, who will sing it to the heroes?"

"Sing it yourself, if you choose. Pelagia sings quite well enough for me."

In an instant the cunning beauty caught at the hint, and poured forth a soft, low, sleepy song: —

"Loose the sail, rest the oar, float away down,
Fleeting and gliding by tower and town;
Life is so short at best! snatch, while thou canst, thy rest,
Sleeping by me!"

"Can you answer that, Wulf?" shouted a dozen voices.

"Hear the song of Asgard, warriors of the Goths! Did not Alaric the king love it well? Did I not sing it before him in the palace of the Cæsars, till he swore, for all the Christian that he was, to go southward in search of the holy city? And when he went to Valhalla, and the ships were wrecked off Sicily, and Adolf the Balth turned back like a lazy hound, and married the daughter of the Romans, whom Odin hates, and went northward again to Gaul, did not I sing you all the song of Asgard in Messina there, till you swore to follow the Amal through fire and water, until we found the hall of Odin, and received the mead-cup from his own hand? Hear it again, warriors of the Goths!"

"Not that song!" roared the Amal, stopping his ears with both his hands. "Will you drive us blood-mad again, just as we are settling down into our sober

senses, and finding out what our lives were given us for?"

"Hear the song of Asgard! On to Asgard, wolves of the Goths!" shouted another; and a babel of voices arose.

"Haven't we been fighting and marching these seven years?"

"Haven't we drank blood enough to satisfy Odin ten times over? If he wants us, let him come himself and lead us!"

"Let us get our winds again before we start afresh!"

"Wulf the Prince is like his name, and never tires; he has a winter-wolf's legs under him; that is no reason why we should have."

"Haven't you heard what the monk says? — we can never get over those cataracts."

"We'll stop his old-wives' tales for him, and then settle for ourselves," said Smid; and springing from the thwart where he had been sitting, he caught up a bill with one hand, and seized Philammon's throat with the other . . . in a moment more, it would have been all over with him . . . .

For the first time in his life, Philammon felt a hostile gripe upon him, and a new sensation rushed through every nerve, as he grappled with the warrior, clutched with his left hand the uplifted wrist, and with his right the girdle, and commenced, without any definite aim, a fierce struggle which, strange to say, as it went on, grew absolutely pleasant.

The women shrieked to their lovers to part the combatants, but in vain.

"Not for worlds! A very fair match, and a very

fair fight! Take your long legs back, Itho, or they will be over you! That's right, my Smid, don't use the knife! They will be overboard in a moment! By all the Valkyrs, they are down! and Smid undermost!"

There was no doubt of it; and in another moment Philammon would have wrenched the bill out of his opponent's hand, when, to the utter astonishment of the on-lookers, he suddenly loosed his hold, shook himself free by one powerful wrench, and quietly retreated to his seat, conscience-stricken at the fearful thirst for blood which had suddenly boiled up within him as he felt his enemy under him.

The on-lookers were struck dumb with astonishment; they had taken for granted that he would, as a matter of course, have used his right of splitting his vanquished opponent's skull — an event which they would of course have deeply deplored, but with which, as men of honour, they could not on any account interfere, but merely console themselves for the loss of their comrade by flaying his conqueror alive "carving him into the blood-eagle," or any other delicate ceremony which might serve as a vent for their sorrow and a comfort to the soul of the deceased.

Smid rose, with the bill in his hand, and looked round him — perhaps to see what was expected of him. He half lifted his weapon to strike. . . . . Philammon, seated, looked him calmly in the face. . . . . The old warrior's eye caught the bank, which was now receding rapidly past them; and when he saw that they were really floating downwards again, without an effort to stem the stream, he put away his bill, and sat him-

self down deliberately in his place, astonishing the onlookers quite as much as Philammon had done.

"Five minutes' good fighting, and no one killed! This is a shame!" quoth another. "Blood we must see, and it had better be yours, master monk, than your betters," — and therewith he rushed on poor Philammon.

He spoke the heart of the crew; the sleeping wolf in them had been awakened by the struggle, and blood they would have; and not frantically, like Celts or Egyptians, but with the cool, humorous cruelty of the Teuton, they rose altogether, and turning Philammon over on his back, deliberated by what death he should die.

Philammon quietly submitted — if submission have anything to do with that state of mind in which sheer astonishment and novelty have broken up all the custom of man's nature, till the strangest deeds and sufferings are taken as matters of course. His sudden escape from the Laura, the new world of thought and action into which he had been plunged, the new companions with whom he had fallen in, had driven him utterly from his moorings, and now anything and everything might happen to him. He who had promised never to look on woman found himself, by circumstances over which he had no control, amid a boatful of the most objectionable species of that most objectionable genus — and the utterly worst having happened, everything else which happened must be better than the worst. For the rest, he had gone forth to see the world — and this was one of the ways of it. So he made up his mind to see it, and be filled with the fruit of his own devices.

And he would have been certainly filled with the same in five minutes more, in some shape too ugly to be mentioned: but as even sinful women have hearts in them, Pelagia shrieked out —

"Amalric! Amalric! do not let them! I cannot bear it!"

"The warriors are free men, my darling, and know what is proper. And what can the life of such a brute be to you?"

Before he could stop her, Pelagia had sprung from her cushions, and thrown herself into the midst of the laughing ring of wild beasts.

"Spare him! Spare him for my sake!" shrieked she.

"Oh, my pretty lady! you mustn't interrupt warrior's sport!"

In an instant she had torn off her shawl, and thrown it over Philammon; and as she stood, with all the outlines of her beautiful limbs revealed through the thin robe of spangled gauze, —

"Let the man who dares, touch him beneath that shawl! — though it be a saffron one!"

The Goths drew back. For Pelagia herself they had as little respect as the rest of the world had. But for a moment she was not the Messalina of Alexandria, but a woman; and true to the old woman-worshipping instinct, they looked one and all at her flashing eyes, full of noble pity and indignation, as well as of mere woman's terror — and drew back, and whispered together.

Whether the good spirit or the evil one would conquer, seemed for a moment doubtful, when Pelagia felt

a heavy hand on her shoulder, and turning, saw Wulf the son of Ovida.

"Go back, pretty woman! Men, I claim the boy. Smid, give him to me. He is your man. You could have killed him if you had chosen, and did not; and no one else shall."

"Give him us, Prince Wulf! We have not seen blood for many a day!"

"You might have seen rivers of it, if you had had the hearts to go onward. The boy is mine, and a brave boy. He has upset a warrior fairly this day, and spared him; and we will make a warrior of him in return."

And he lifted up the prostrate monk.

"You are my man now. Do you like fighting?"

Philammon, not understanding the language in which he was addressed, could only shake his head — though if he had known what its import was, he could hardly in honesty have said, No.

"He shakes his head! He does not like it! He is craven! Let us have him!"

"I had killed kings when you were shooting frogs," cried Smid. "Listen to me, my sons! A coward grips sharply at first, and loosens his hand after a while, because his blood is soon hot and soon cold. A brave man's gripe grows the firmer the longer he holds, because the spirit of Odin comes upon him. I watched the boy's hands on my throat; and he will make a man; and I will make him one. However, we may as well make him useful at once; so give him an oar."

"Well," answered his new protector, "he can as well row us as be rowed by us; and if we are to go

back to a cow's death and the pool of Hela, the quicker we go the better."

And as the men settled themselves again to their oars, one was put into Philammon's hand, which he managed with such strength and skill, that his late tormentors, who, in spite of an occasional inclination to robbery and murder, were thoroughly good-natured, honest fellows, clapped him on the back, and praised him as heartily as they had just now heartily intended to torture him to death, and then went forward, as many of them as were not rowing, to examine the strange beast which they had just slaughtered, pawing him over from tusks to tail, putting their heads into his mouth, trying their knives on his side, comparing him to all beasts, like and unlike, which they had ever seen, and laughing and shoving each other about with the fun and childish wonder of a party of schoolboys; till Smid, who was the wit of the party, settled the comparative anatomy of the subject for them —

"Valhalla! I've found out what he's most like! — One of those big blue plums, which gave us all the stomach-ache when we were encamped in the orchards above Ravenna!"

CHAPTER IV.

Miriam.

One morning in the same week, Hypatia's favourite maid entered her chamber with a somewhat terrified face.

"The old Jewess, madam — the hag who has been watching so often lately under the wall opposite. She frightened us all out of our senses last evening by peeping in. We all said she had the evil eye, if any one ever had —"

"Well, what of her?"

"She is below, madam, and will speak with you. Not that I care for her; I have my amulet on. I hope you have?"

"Silly girl! Those who have been initiated as I have in the mysteries of the gods, can defy spirits and command them. Do you suppose that the favourite of Pallas Athene will condescend to charms and magic? Send her up."

The girl retreated, with a look half of awe, half of doubt at the lofty pretensions of her mistress, and returned with old Miriam, keeping, however, prudently behind her, in order to test as little as possible the power of her own amulet by avoiding the basilisk eye which had terrified her.

Miriam came in, and advancing to the proud beauty, who remained seated, made an obeisance down

to the very floor, without, however, taking her eyes for an instant off Hypatia's face.

Her countenance was haggard and bony, with broad sharp-cut lips, stamped with a strangely mingled expression of strength and sensuality. But the feature about her which instantly fixed Hypatia's attention and from which she could not in spite of herself withdraw it, was the dry, glittering, coal-black eye which glared out from underneath the grey fringe of her swarthy brows, between black locks covered with gold coins. Hypatia could look at nothing but those eyes; and she reddened, and grew all but unphilosophically angry, as she saw that the old woman intended her to look at them, and feel the strange power which she evidently wished them to exercise.

After a moment's silence, Miriam drew a letter from her bosom, and with a second low obeisance presented it.

"From whom is this?"

"Perhaps the letter itself will tell the beautiful lady, the fortunate lady, the discerning lady," answered she, in a fawning, wheedling tone. "How should a poor old Jewess know great folk's secrets?"

"Great folks?" —

Hypatia looked at the seal which fixed a silk cord round the letter. It was Orestes'; and so was the handwriting..... "Strange, that he should have chosen such a messenger! What message could it be which required such secrecy?"

She clapped her hands for the maid. "Let this woman wait in the ante-room." Miriam glided out backwards, bowing as she went. As Hypatia looked up over the letter to see whether she was alone, she

caught a last glance of that eye still fixed upon her, and an expression in Miriam's face which made her, she knew not why, shudder and turn chill.

"Foolish that I am! What can that witch be to me? But now for the letter."

"To the most noble and most beautiful, the mistress of philosophy, beloved of Athene, her pupil and slave sends greeting." . . . .

"My slave! and no name mentioned!"

"There are those who consider that the favourite hen of Honorius, which bears the name of the Imperial City, would thrive better under a new feeder; and the Count of Africa has been despatched by himself and by the immortal gods to superintend for the present the poultry-yard of the Cæsars — at least during the absence of Adolf and Placidia. There are those also who consider that in his absence the Numidian lion might be prevailed on to become the yoke-fellow of the Egyptian crocodile; and a farm which, ploughed by such a pair, should extend from the upper cataract to the pillars of Hercules, might have charms even for a philosopher. But while the ploughman is without a nymph, Arcadia is imperfect. What were Dionusos without his Ariadne, Ares without Aphrodite, Zeus without Here? Even Artemis has her Endymion; Athene alone remains unwedded; but only because Hephæstus was too rough a wooer. Such is not he who now offers to the representative of Athene the opportunity of sharing that which may be with the help of her wisdom, which without her is impossible. *Φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν.* Shall Eros, invincible for ages, be balked at last of the noblest game against which he ever drew his bow?" . . . .

If Hypatia's colour had faded a moment before under the withering glance of the old Jewess, it rose again swiftly enough, as she read line after line of his strange epistle; till at last, crushing it together in her hand, she rose and hurried into the adjoining library, where Theon sat over his books.

"Father, do you know anything of this? Look what Orestes has dared to send me by the hands of some base Jewish witch!" — And she spread the letter before him, and stood impatient, her whole figure dilated with pride and anger, as the old man read it slowly and carefully, and then looked up, apparently not ill-pleased with the contents.

"What, father?" asked she, half reproachfully. "Do not you, too, feel the insult which has been put upon your daughter?"

"My dear child," with a puzzled look, "do you not see that he offers you —"

"I know what he offers me, father. The Empire of Africa. . . . . I am to descend from the mountain-heights of science, from the contemplation of the unchangeable and the ineffable glories, into the foul fields and farm-yards of earthly practical life, and become a drudge among political chicanery, and the petty ambitions, and sins, and falsehoods of the earthly herd..... And the price which he offers me — me, the stainless — me, the virgin — me, the untamed, — is — his hand! Pallas Athene! dost thou not blush with thy child?"

"But, my child — my child, — an empire —"

"Would the empire of the world restore my lost self-respect — my just pride? Would it save my cheek from blushes every time I recollected that I

and demons, principalities and powers, from Athene down to his daughter's guardian spirit, to move a determination which he was too weak to gainsay, and yet too rational to approve.

At last the struggle was over, and she looked up, clear, calm, and glorious again.

"It shall be. For the sake of the immortal gods — for the sake of art, and science, and learning, and philosophy. . . . . It shall be. If the gods demand a victim, here am I. If a second time in the history of the ages the Grecian fleet cannot sail forth, conquering and civilizing, without the sacrifice of a virgin, I give my throat to the knife. Father, call me no more Hypatia: call me Iphigenia!"

"And me Agamemnon?" asked the old man, attempting a faint jest through his tears of joy. "I dare say you think me a very cruel father; but —"

"Spare me, father — I have spared you."

And she began to write her answer.

"I have accepted his offer — conditionally, that is. And on whether he have courage or not to fulfil that condition, depends — Do not ask me what it is. While Cyril is leader of the Christian mob, it may be safer for you, my father, that you should be able to deny all knowledge of my answer. Be content. I have said this — that if he will do as you would have him do, I will do as you would have me do."

"Have you not been too rash? Have you not demanded of him something which, for the sake of public opinion, he dare not grant openly, and yet which he may allow you to do for yourself when once —"

"I have. If I am to be a victim, the sacrificing

priest shall at least be a man, and not a coward and a time-server. If he believes this Christian faith, let him defend it against me; for either it or I shall perish. If he does not — as he does not — let him give up living in a lie, and taking on his lips blasphemies against the immortals, from which his heart and reason revolt!"

And she clapped her hands again for the maid-servant, gave her the letter silently, shut the doors of her chamber, and tried to resume her Commentary on Plotinus. Alas! what were all the wire-drawn dreams of metaphysics to her in that real and human struggle of the heart? What availed it to define the process by which individual souls emanated from the universal one, while her own soul had, singly and on its own responsibility, to decide so terrible an act of will? or to write fine words with pen and ink about the immutability of the supreme Reason, while her own reason was left there to struggle for its life amid a roaring shoreless waste of doubts and darkness? Oh, how grand, and clear, and logical it had all looked half an hour ago! And how irrefragably she had been deducing from it all, syllogism after syllogism, the non-existence of evil! — how it was but a lower form of good, one of the countless products of the one great all-pervading mind which could not err or change, only so strange and recondite in its form as to excite antipathy in all minds but that of the philosopher, who learnt to see the stem which connected the apparently bitter fruit with the perfect root from whence it sprung. Could she see the stem there? — the connexion between the pure and supreme Reason, and the hideous caresses of the debauched and cowardly Orestes? Was

not that evil, pure, unadulterate with any vein of goo past, present, or future? . . . .

True; — she might keep her spirit pure amid it al she might sacrifice the base body, and ennoble th soul by the self-sacrifice . . . . And yet, would no that increase the horror, the agony, the evil of it — to her, at least, most real evil, not to be explained away — and yet the gods required it? Were they just, merciful in that? Was it like them, to torture her, their last unshaken votary? Did they require it? Was it not required of them by some higher power, of whom they were only the emanations, the tools, the puppets? — and required of that higher power by some still higher one — some nameless, absolute destiny of which Orestes and she, and all heaven and earth, were but the victims, dragged along in an inevitable vortex, helpless, hopeless, toward that for which each was meant? — And she was meant for this! The thought was unbearable; it turned her giddy. No! she would not! She would rebel! Like Prometheus, she would dare destiny, and brave its worst! And she sprang up to recal the letter. . . . . Miriam was gone; and she threw herself on the floor, and wept bitterly.

And her peace of mind would certainly not have been improved, could she have seen old Miriam hurry home with her letter to a dingy house in the Jews' quarter, where it was unsealed, read, and sealed up again with such marvellous skill, that no eye could have detected the change; and finally, still less would she have been comforted could she have heard the conversation which was going on in a summer-room of Orestes' palace, between that illustrious statesman

and Raphael Aben-Ezra, who were lying on two divans opposite each other, whiling away by a throw or two of dice, the anxious moments which delayed her answer.

"Trays again! The devil is in you, Raphael!"

"I believe he is," answered Raphael, sweeping up the gold pieces. . . . .

"When will that old witch be back?"

"When she has read through your letter, and Hypatia's answer."

"Read them?"

"Of course. You don't fancy she is going to be fool enough to carry a message without knowing what it is? Don't be angry; she won't tell. She would give one of those two grave lights there, which she calls her eyes, to see the thing prosper."

"Why?"

"Your excellency will know when the letter comes. Here she is; I hear steps in the cloister. Now, one bet before they enter. I give you two to one she asks you to turn pagan."

"What in? Negro-boys?"

"Anything you like."

"Taken. Come in, slaves!"

And Hypocorisma entered, pouting.

"That Jewish fury is outside with a letter, and has the impudence to say she won't let me bring it in!"

"Bring her in then. Quick!"

"I wonder what I am here for, if people have secrets that I am not to know," grumbled the spoilt youth.

"Do you want a blue ribbon round those white

sides of yours, you monkey?" answered Orestes. "Because, if you do, the hippopotamus hide hangs ready outside."

"Let us make him kneel down here for a couple of hours, and use him as a dice-board," said Raphael, "as you used to do to the girls in Armenia."

"Ah, you recollect that? — and how the barbarian papas used to grumble, till I had to crucify one or two, eh? That was something like life! I love those out-of-the-way stations, where nobody asks questions: but here one might as well live among the monks in Nitria. Here comes Canidia! Ah, the answer? Hand it here, my queen of go-betweens!"

Orestes read it, — and his countenance fell.

"I have won?"

"Out of the room, slaves! and no listening!"

"I have won, then?"

Orestes tossed the letter across to him, and Raphael read —

"The immortal gods accept no divided worship; and he who would command the counsels of their prophetess must remember that they will vouchsafe to her no illumination till their lost honours be restored. If he who aspires to be the lord of Africa dare trample on the hateful cross, and restore the Cæsareum to those for whose worship it was built — if he dare proclaim aloud with his lips, and in his deeds, that contempt for novel and barbarous superstitions, which his taste and reason have already taught him, then he would prove himself one with whom it were a glory to labour, to dare, to die in a great cause. But till then —"

And so the letter ended.

"What am I to do?"

"Take her at her word."

"Good heavens! I shall be excommunicated! And — and — what is to become of my soul?"

"What will become of it in any case, my most excellent lord?" answered Raphael, blandly

"You mean — I know what you cursed Jews think will happen to every one but yourselves. But what would the world say? I an apostate! And in the face of Cyril and the populace! I daren't, I tell you!"

"No one asked your excellency to apostatize."

"Why, what? What did you say just now?"

"I asked you to promise. It will not be the first time that promises before marriage have not exactly coincided with performance afterwards."

"I daren't — that is, I won't promise. I believe, now, this is some trap of your Jewish intrigue, just to make me commit myself against those Christians, whom you hate."

"I assure you, I despise all mankind far too profoundly to hate them. How disinterested my advice was when I proposed this match to you, you never will know; indeed, it would be boastful in me to tell you. But really you must make a little sacrifice to win this foolish girl. With all the depth and daring of her intellect to help you, you might be a match for Romans, Byzantines, and Goths at once. And as for beauty — why, there is one dimple inside that wrist, just at the setting on of the sweet little hand, worth all the other flesh and blood in Alexandria."

"By Jove! you admire her so much, I suspect you must be in love with her yourself. Why don't you marry her? I'll make you my prime minister, and

then we shall have the use of her wits without the trouble of her fancies. By the twelve gods! If you marry her and help me, I'll make you what you like!"

Raphael rose, and bowed to the earth.

"Your serene high-mightiness overwhelms me. But I assure you, that never having as yet cared for any one's interest but my own, I could not be expected, at my time of life, to devote myself to that of another, even though it were to yours."

"Candid!"

"Exactly so; and moreover, whosoever I may marry will be practically, as well as theoretically, my private and peculiar property ..... You comprehend?"

"Candid again."

"Exactly so; and waiving the third argument, that she probably might not choose to marry me, I beg to remark that it would not be proper to allow the world to say, that I, the subject, had a wiser and fairer wife than you, the ruler; especially a wife who had already refused that ruler's complimentary offer."

"By Jove! and she has refused me in good earnest! I'll make her repent it! I was a fool to ask her at all! What's the use of having guards, if one can't compel what one wants? If fair means can't do it, foul shall! I'll send for her this moment!"

"Most illustrious majesty — it will not succeed. You do not know that woman's determination. Scourges and red-hot pincers will not shake her, alive; and dead, she will be of no use whatsoever to you, while she will be of great use to Cyril."

"How?"

"He will be most happy to make the whole story a handle against you, give out that she died a virgin-

martyr, in defence of the most holy catholic and apostolic faith, get miracles worked at her tomb, and pull your palace about your ears on the strength thereof."

"Cyril will hear of it anyhow: that's another dilemma into which you have brought me, you intriguing rascal! Why this girl will be boasting all over Alexandria that I have offered her marriage, and that she has done herself the honour to refuse me!"

"She will be much too wise to do anything of the kind; she has sense enough to know that if she did so, you would inform a Christian populace what conditions she offered you, and, with all her contempt for the burden of the flesh, she has no mind to be lightened of that pretty load by being torn in pieces by Christian monks: a very probable ending for her in any case, as she herself, in her melancholy moods, confesses!"

"What will you have me to do, then?"

"Simply nothing. Let the prophetic spirit go out of her, as it will, in a day or two, and then — I know nothing of human nature, if she does not bate a little of her own price. Depend on it, for all her ineffabilities, and impassibilites, and all the rest of the seventh-heaven moonshine at which we play here in Alexandria, a throne is far too pretty a bait for even Hypatia the Pythoness to refuse. Leave well alone is a good rule, but leave ill alone is a better. So now another bet before we part, and this time three to one. Do nothing either way, and she sends to you of her own accord before a month is out. In Caucasian mules? Done? Be it so."

"Well you are the most charming counsellor for a poor perplexed devil of a prefect! If I had but a

private fortune like you, I could just take the money, and let the work do itself."

"Which is the true method of successful government. Your slave bids you farewell. Do not forget our bet. You dine with me to-morrow?"

And Raphael bowed himself out.

As he left the prefect's door, he saw Miriam on the opposite side of the street, evidently watching for him. As soon as she saw him, she held on her own side, without appearing to notice him, till he turned a corner, and then crossing, caught him eagerly by the arm.

"Does the fool dare?"

"Who dare what?"

"You know what I mean. Do you suppose old Miriam carries letters without taking care to know what is inside them? Will he apostatize? Tell me. I am secret as the grave!"

"The fool has found an old worm-eaten rag of conscience somewhere in the corner of his heart, and dare not."

"Curse the coward! And such a plot as I had laid! I would have swept every Christian dog out of Africa within the year. What is the man afraid of?"

"Hell-fire."

"Why he will go there in any case, the accursed Gentile!"

"So I hinted to him, as delicately as I could; but like the rest of the world, he had a sort of partiality for getting thither by his own road."

"Coward! And whom shall I get now? Oh, if that Pelagia had as much cunning in her whole body

as Hypatia has in her little finger, I'd seat her and her Goth upon the throne of the Cæsars. But —"

"But she has five senses, and just enough wit to use them, eh?"

"Don't laugh at her for that, the darling! I do delight in her, after all. It warms even my old blood to see how thoroughly she knows her business, and how she enjoys it, like a true daughter of Eve."

"She has been your most successful pupil, certainly, mother. You may well be proud of her."

The old hag chuckled to herself a while; and then suddenly turning to Raphael —

"See here! I have a present for you;" and she pulled out a magnificent ring.

"Why, mother, you are always giving me presents. It was but a month ago you sent me this poisoned dagger."

"Why not, eh? — why not? Why should not Jew give to Jew? Take the old woman's ring!"

"What a glorious opal!"

"Ah, that is an opal, indeed! And the unspeakable name upon it; just like Solomon's own. Take it, I say! Whosoever wears that need never fear fire, steel, poison, or woman's eye."

"Your own included, eh?"

"Take it, I say!" and Miriam caught his hand, and forced the ring on his finger. "There! Now you're safe. And now call me mother again. I like it. I don't know why, but I like it. And — Raphael Aben-Ezra — don't laugh at me, and call me witch and hag, as you often do. I don't care about it from any one else; I'm accustomed to it. But when you do it, I always long to stab you. That's why I

gave you the dagger. I used to wear it; and I was afraid I might be tempted to use it some day, when the thought came across me how handsome you'd look, and how quiet, when you were dead, and your soul up there so happy in Abraham's bosom, watching all the Gentiles frying and roasting for ever down below. Don't laugh at me, I say; and don't thwart me! I may make you the emperor's prime minister, some day. I can if I choose."

"Heaven forbid!" said Raphael, laughing.

"Don't laugh. I cast your nativity last night, and I know you have no cause to laugh. A great danger hangs over you, and a deep temptation. And if you weather this storm, you may be chamberlain, prime minister, emperor, if you will. And you shall be — by the four archangels, you shall!"

And the old woman vanished down a by-lane, leaving Rapheel utterly bewildered.

"Moses and the prophets! Does the old lady intend to marry me? What can there be in this very lazy and selfish personage who bears my name, to excite so romantic an affection? Well, Raphael Aben-Ezra, thou hast one more friend in the world beside Bran the mastiff; and therefore one more trouble — seeing that friends always expect a due return of affection and good offices, and what not. I wonder whether the old lady has been getting into a scrape kidnapping, and wants my patronage to help her out of it. . . . . Three-quarters of a mile of roasting sun between me and home! . . . . I must hire a gig, or a litter, or something, off the next stand . . . with a driver who has been eating onions. . . . . and of course there is not a stand for the next half-mile. Oh, divine æther! as

Prometheus has it, and ye swiftwinged breezes (I wish there were any here), when will it all be over? Three-and-thirty years have I endured already, of this Babel of knaves and fools; and with this abominable good health of mine, which won't even help me with gout or indigestion, I am likely to have three-and-thirty years more of it. . . . I know nothing, and I care for nothing, and I expect nothing; and I actually can't take the trouble to prick a hole in myself, and let the very small amount of wits out, to see something really worth seeing, and try its strength at something really worth doing — if, after all, the other side of the grave does not turn out to be just as stupid as this one . . . . When will it be all over, and I in Abraham's bosom — or any one else's, provided it be not a woman's?"

CHAPTER V.

A Day in Alexandria.

In the mean while Philammon, with his hosts, the Goths, had been slipping down the stream. Passing, one after another, world-old cities now dwindled to decaying towns, and numberless canal-mouths, now fast falling into ruin with the fields to which they ensured fertility, under the pressure of Roman extortion and misrule, they had entered one evening the mouth of the great canal of Alexandria, slid easily all night across the star-bespangled shadows of Lake Mareotis, and found themselves, when the next morning dawned, among the countless masts and noisy quays of the greatest seaport in the world. The motley crowd of foreigners, the hubbub of all dialects from the Crimæa to Cadiz, the vast piles of merchandise, and heaps of wheat, lying unsheltered in that rainless air, the huge bulk of the corn ships lading for Rome, whose tall sides rose story over story, like floating palaces, above the buildings of some inner dock — these sights, and a hundred more, made the young monk think that the world did not look at first sight a thing to be despised. In front of heaps of fruit, fresh from the market-boats, black groups of glossy negro-slaves were basking and laughing on the quay, looking anxiously and coquettishly round in hopes of a purchaser; they evidently

did not think the change from desert toil to city luxuries a change for the worse. Philammon turned away his eyes from beholding vanity; but only to meet fresh vanity wheresoever they fell. He felt crushed by the multitude of new objects, stunned by the din around; and scarcely recollected himself enough to seize the first opportunity of escaping from his dangerous companions.

"Holloa!" roared Smid, the armourer, as he scrambled on to the steps of the slip; "you are not going to run away without bidding us good-by?"

"Stop with me, boy!" said old Wulf. "I saved you; and you are my man."

Philammon turned and hesitated.

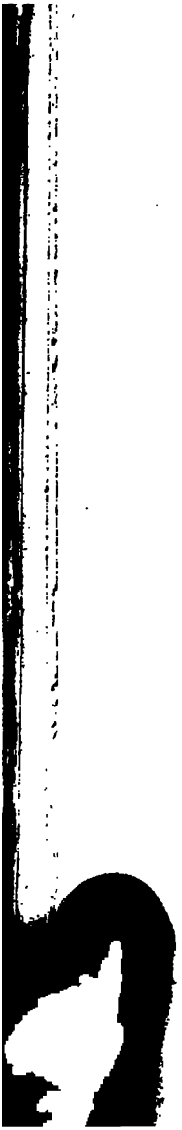
"I am a monk, and God's man."

"You can be that anywhere. I will make you a warrior."

"The weapons of my warfare are not of flesh and blood, but prayer and fasting," answered poor Philammon, who felt already that he should have ten times more need of the said weapons in Alexandria, than ever he had had in the desert .... "Let me go! I am not made for your life! I thank you, bless you! I will pray for you, sir! but let me go!"

"Curse the craven hound!" roared half a dozen voices. "Why did you not let us have our will with him, Prince Wulf? You might have expected such gratitude from a monk."

"He owes me my share of the sport," quoth Smid. "And here it is!" And a hatchet, thrown with practised aim, whistled right for Philammon's head — He had just time to swerve, and the weapon struck and snapped against the granite wall behind.



"Well saved!" said Wulf, coolly, while the sai
and market-women above yelled murder, and the cust
house officers, and other constables and catchpole
the harbour, rushed to the place — and retired a
quietly at the thunder of the Amal from the bo
stern —

"Never mind! my good fellows! we're only Go
and on a visit to the prefect, too."

"Only Goths, my donkey-riding friends!" ech
Smid, and at that ominous name the whole p
comitatus tried to look unconcerned, and found
denly that their presence was absolutely required in
opposite direction.

"Let him go," said Wulf, as he stalked up
steps. "Let the boy go. I never set my heart
any man yet," he growled to himself, in an un
voice, "but what he disappointed me — and I n
not expect more from this fellow. Come, men, ash
and get drunk!"

Philammon, of course, now that he had leave
go, longed to stay — at all events he must go b
and thank his hosts. He turned unwillingly to
so, as hastily as he could, and found Pelagia and
gigantic lover just entering a palanquin. With do
cast eyes he approached the beautiful basilisk,
stammered out some commonplace; and she, full
smiles, turned to him at once.

"Tell us more about yourself before we part.
speak such beautiful Greek — true Athenian. I
quite delightful to hear one's own accent again. W
you ever at Athens?"

"When I was a child; I recollect — that is
think —"

"What?" asked Pelagia, eagerly.

"A great house in Athens — and a great battle there — and coming to Egypt in a ship."

"Heavens!" said Pelagia, and paused. . . . . "How strange! Girls, who said he was like me?"

"I'm sure we meant no harm, if we did say it in joke," pouted one of the attendants.

"Like me! — you must come and see us. I have something to say to you. . . . . You must!"

Philammon misinterpreted the intense interest of her tone, and if he did not shrink back, gave some involuntary gesture of reluctance. Pelagia laughed aloud.

"Don't be vain enough to suspect, foolish boy, but come! Do you think that I have nothing to talk about but nonsense? Come and see me. It may be better for you. I live in —," and she named a fashionable street, which Philammon, though he inwardly vowed not to accept the invitation, somehow could not help remembering.

"Do leave the wild man, and come," growled the Amal from within the palanquin. "You are not going to turn nun, I hope?"

"Not while the first man I ever met in the world stays in it," answered Pelagia, as she skipped into the palanquin, taking care to show the most lovely white heel and ankle, and like the Parthian, send a random arrow as she retreated. But the dart was lost on Philammon, who had been already hustled away by the bevy of laughing attendants, amid baskets, dressing-cases, and bird-cages, and was fain to make his escape into the Babel round, and inquire his way to the patriarch's house.

"Patriarch's house?" answered the man whom he first addressed, a little lean, swarthy fellow, with merry black eyes, who, with a basket of fruit at his feet, was sunning himself on a baulk of timber, meditatively chewing the papyrus-cane, and examining the strangers with a look of absurd sagacity. "I know it; without a doubt I know it; all Alexandria has good reason to know it. Are you a monk?"

"Yes."

"Then ask your way the monks; you won't go far without finding one."

"But I do not even know the right direction: what is your grudge against monks, my good man?"

"Look here, my youth; you seem too ingenuous for a monk. Don't flatter yourself that it will last. If you can wear the sheep-skin, and haunt the churches here for a month, without learning to lie, and slander, and clap, and hoot, and perhaps play your part in a sedition-and-murder satyric drama — why, you are a better man than I take you for. I, sir, am a Greek, and a philosopher; though the whirlpool of matter may have, and indeed has, involved my ethereal spark in the body of a porter. Therefore, youth," continued the little man, starting up upon his baulk like an excited monkey, and stretching out one oratoric paw, "I bear a treble hatred to the monkish tribe. First, as a man and a husband; . . . for as for the smiles of beauty, or otherwise, — such as I have, I have; and the monks, if they had their wicked will, would leave neither men nor women in the world. Sir, they would exterminate the human race in a single generation, by a voluntary suicide! Secondly, as a porter; for if all men turned monks, nobody would be idle, and the

profession of portering would be annihilated. Thirdly, sir, as a philosopher; for as the false coin is odious to the true, so is the irrational and animal ascetism of the monk, to the logical and methodic self-restraint of one who, like your humblest of philosophers, aspires to a life according to the pure reason."

"And pray," asked Philammon, half-laughing, "who has been your tutor in philosophy?"

"The fountain of classic wisdom, Hypatia herself. As the ancient sage — the name is unimportant to a monk — pumped water nightly that he might study by day, so I, the guardian of cloaks and parasols at the sacred doors of her lecture-room, imbibe celestial knowledge. From my youth I felt in me a soul above the matter-entangled herd. She revealed to me the glorious fact, that I am a spark of Divinity itself. A fallen star, I am, sir!" continued he, pensively, stroking his lean stomach — "a fallen star! — fallen, if the dignity of philosophy will allow of the simile, among the hogs of the lower world — indeed, into the hog-bucket itself. Well, after all, I will show you the way to the Archbishop's. There is a philosophic pleasure in opening one's treasures to the modest young. Perhaps you will assist me by carrying this basket of fruit?" And the little man jumped up, put his basket on Philammon's head, and trotted up a neighbouring street.

Philammon followed, half contemptuous, half wondering at what this philosophy might be, which could feed the self-conceit of anything so abject as his ragged little apish guide; but the novel roar and whirl of the street, the perpetual stream of busy faces, the line of curricles, palanquins, laden asses, camels, ele-

phants, which met and passed him, and squeezed him up steps and into doorways, as they threaded their way through the great Moon-gate into the ample street beyond, drove everything from his mind but wondering curiosity, and a vague, helpless dread of that living wilderness, more terrible than any dead wilderness of sand which he had left behind. Already he longed for the repose, the silence of the Laura — for faces which knew him and smiled upon him; but it was too late to turn back now. His guide held on for more than a mile up the great main street, crossed in the centre of the city, at right angles, by one equally magnificent, at each end of which miles away, appeared, dim and distant over the heads of the living stream of passengers, the yellow sand-hills of the desert; while at the end of the vista in front of them gleamed the blue harbour, through a network of countless masts.

At last they reached the quay at the opposite end of the street; and there burst on Philammon's astonished eyes a vast semicircle of blue sea, ringed with palaces and towers. . . . . He stopped involuntarily; and his little guide stopped also, and looked askance at the young monk, to watch the effect which that grand panorama should produce on him.

"There! — Behold our works! Us Greeks! — us benighted heathens! Look at it and feel yourself what you are, a very small, conceited, ignorant young person, who fancies that your new religion gives you a right to despise every one else. Did Christians make all this? Did Christians build that Pharos there on the left horn — wonder of the world? Did Christians raise that mile-long mole which runs towards the land,

with its two draw-bridges, connecting the two ports? Did Christians build this esplanade, or this gate of the sun above our heads? Or that Cæsareum on our right here? Look at those obelisks before it!" And he pointed upwards to those two world-famous ones, one of which still lies on its ancient site, as Cleopatra's needle. "Look up! look up, I say, and feel small — very small indeed! Did Christians raise them, or engrave them from base to point with the wisdom of the ancients? Did Christians build that Museum next to it, or design its statues and its frescoes — now, alas! re-echoing no more to the hummings of the Attic bee? Did they pile up out of the waves that palace beyond it, or that Exchange? or fill that Temple of Neptune with breathing brass and blushing marble? Did they build that Timonium on the point, where Antony, worsted at Actium, forgot his shame in Cleopatra's arms? Did they quarry out that island of Antirrhodus into a nest of docks, or cover those waters with the sails of every nation under heaven? Speak! Thou son of bats and moles — thou six feet of sand — thou mummy out of the cliff caverns! Can monks do works like these?"

"Other men have laboured, and we have entered into their labours," answered Philammon, trying to seem as unconcerned as he could. He was, indeed, too utterly astonished to be angry at anything. The overwhelming vastness, multiplicity, and magnificence of the whole scene; the range of buildings, such as mother earth never, perhaps, carried on her lap before or since; the extraordinary variety of form — the pure Doric and Ionic of the earlier Ptolemies, the barbaric and confused gorgeousness of the later Roman, and

here and there an imitation of the grand elephantine style of old Egypt, its gaudy colours relieving, while they deepened, the effect of its massive and simple outlines; the eternal repose of that great belt of stone contrasting with the restless ripple of the glittering harbour, and the busy sails which crowded out into the sea beyond, like white doves taking their flight into boundless space; — all dazzled, overpowered, saddened him. . . . . This was the world. . . . . Was it not beautiful? . . . . Must not the men who made all this have been — if not great . . . . yet . . . . he knew not what? Surely they had great souls and noble thoughts in them! Surely there was something godlike in being able to create such things! Not for themselves alone, too; but for a nation — for generations yet unborn. . . . . And there was the sea . . . . and beyond it, nations of men innumerable. . . . . His imagination was dizzy with thinking of them. . . . . Were they all doomed — lost? . . . . Had God no love for them?

At last, recovering himself, he recollected his errand, and again asked his way to the archbishop's house.

"This way, O youthful nonentity!" answered the little man, leading the way round the great front of the Cæsareum, at the foot of the obelisks.

Philammon's eye fell on some new masonry in the pediment, ornamented with Christian symbols.

"How? Is this a church?"

"It is the Cæsareum. It has become temporarily a church. The immortal gods have, for the time being, condescended to waive their rights; but it is the Cæsareum, nevertheless. This way; down this street to

the right. There," said he, pointing to a doorway in the side of the Museum, "is the last haunt of the Muses — the lecture-room of Hypatia, the school of my unworthiness . . . . And here," stopping at the door of a splendid house on the opposite side of the street, "is the residence of that blest favourite of Athene — Neith, as the barbarians of Egypt would denominate the goddess — we men of Macedonia retain the time-honoured Grecian nomenclature. . . . . You may put down your basket." And he knocked at the door, and delivering the fruit to a black porter, made a polite obeisance to Philammon, and seemed on the point of taking his departure.

"But where is the archbishop's house?"

"Close to the Serapeium. You cannot miss the place: four hundred columns of marble, now ruined by Christian persecutors, stand on an eminence —"

"But how far off?"

"About three miles; near the gate of the Moon."

"Why, was not that the gate by which we entered the city on the other side?"

"Exactly so; you will know your way back, having already traversed it."

Philammon checked a decidedly carnal inclination to seize the little fellow by the throat, and knock his head against the wall, and contented himself by saying —

"Then do you actually mean to say, you heathen villain, that you have taken me six or seven miles out of my road?"

"Good words, young man. If you do me harm, I call for help; we are close to the Jews' quarter, and there are some thousands there who will swarm out

like wasps on the chance of beating a monk to death. Yet that which I have done, I have done with good purpose. First, politically, or according to practical wisdom — in order that you, not I, might carry the basket. Next, philosophically, or according to the intuitions of the pure reason — in order that you might, by beholding the magnificence of that great civilization which your fellows wish to destroy, learn that you are an ass, and a tortoise, and a nonentity; and so beholding yourself to be nothing, may be moved to become something."

And he moved off.

Philammon seized him by the collar of his ragged tunic, and held him in a grip from which the little man, though he twisted like an eel, could not escape.

"Peaceably, if you will, if not, by main force. You shall go back with me, and show me every step of the way. It is a just penalty."

"The philosopher conquers circumstances by submitting to them. I go peaceably. Indeed, the base necessities of the hog-bucket side of existence compel me of themselves back to the Moon-gate, for another early fruit job."

So they went back together.

Now why Philammon's thoughts should have been running on the next new specimen of womankind to whom he had been introduced, though only in name, let psychologists tell, but certainly, after he had walked some half-mile in silence, he suddenly woke up, as out of many meditations, and asked —

"But who is this Hypatia, of whom you talk so much?"

"Who is Hypatia, rustic? The Queen of Alex-

andria! In wit, Athene; Hera in majesty; in beauty, Aphrodite!"

"And who are they?" asked Philammon.

The porter stopped, surveyed him slowly from foot to head with an expression of boundless pity and contempt, and was in the act of walking off in the ecstasy of his disdain, when he was brought to suddenly by Philammon's strong arm.

"Ah! — I recollect. There is a compact. . . . . Who is Athene? The goddess, giver of wisdom. Hera, spouse of Zeus, Queen of the Celestials; Aphrodite, mother of love. . . . . You are not expected to understand."

Philammon did understand, however, so much as this, that Hypatia was a very unique and wonderful person in the mind of his little guide; and therefore asked the only further question by which he could as yet test any Alexandrian phenomenon —

"And is she a friend of the patriarch?"

The porter opened his eyes very wide, put his middle finger in a careful and complicated fashion between his fore and third finger, and extending it playfully toward Philammon, performed therewith certain mysterious signals, the effect whereof being totally lost on him, the little man stopped, took another look at Philammon's stately figure, and answered —

"Of the human race in general, my young friend. The philosopher must rise above the individual, to the contemplation of the universal. . . . . Aha! — Here is something worth seeing, and the gates are open." And he stopped at the portal of a vast building.

"Is this the patriarch's house?"

"The patriarch's tastes are more plebeian. He lives, they say, in two dirty little rooms — knowing what is fit for him. The patriarch's house? Its antipodes, my young friend — that is, if such beings have a cosmic existence, on which point Hypatia has her doubts. This is the temple of art and beauty; the Delphic tripod of poetic inspiration; the solace of the earth-worn drudge; in a word, the theatre; which your patriarch, if he could, would convert to-morrow into a — but the philosopher must not revile. Ah! I see the prefect's apparitors at the gate. He is making the polity, as we call it here; the dispositions; settling, in short, the bill of fare for the day, in compliance with the public palate. A facetious pantomime dances here on this day every week — admired by some, the Jews especially. To the more classic taste, many of his movements — his recoil, especially — are wanting in the true antique severity — might be called, perhaps, on the whole, indecent. Still the weary pilgrim must be amused. Let us step in and hear."

But before Philammon could refuse, an uproar arose within, a rush outward of the mob, and inward of the prefect's apparitors.

"It is false!" shouted many voices. "A Jewish calumny! The man is innocent!"

"There's no more sedition in him than there is in me," roared a fat butcher, who looked as ready to fell a man as an ox. "He was always the first and the last to clap the holy patriarch at sermon."

"Dear tender soul," whimpered a woman; "and I said to him only this morning, why don't you flog my boys, Master Hierax? how can you expect them

to learn if they are not flogged? And he said, he never could abide the sight of a rod, it made his back tingle so."

"Which was plainly a prophecy!"

"And proves him innocent; for how could he prophesy if he was not one of the holy ones?"

"Monks to the rescue! Hierax a Christian is taken and tortured in the theatre!" thundered a wild hermit, his beard and hair streaming about his chest and shoulders.

"Nitria! Nitria! For God and the mother of God, monks of Nitria! Down with the Jewish slanderers! Down with heathen tyrants!" — And the mob, reinforced as if by magic by hundreds from without, swept down the huge vaulted passage, carrying Philammon and the porter with them.

"My friends," quoth the little man, trying to look philosophically calm, though he was fairly off his legs, and hanging between heaven and earth on the elbows of the bystanders; "whence this tumult?"

"The Jews got up a cry that Hierax wanted to raise a riot. Curse them and their sabbath, they're always rioting on Saturdays about this dancer of theirs, instead of working like honest Christians!"

"And rioting on Sunday instead. Ahem! sectarian differences, which the philosopher" —

The rest of the sentence disappeared with the speaker, as a sudden opening of the mob let him drop, and buried him under innumerable legs.

Philammon, furious at the notion of persecution, maddened by the cries around him, found himself bursting fiercely through the crowd, till he reached the front ranks, where tall gates of open ironwork

barred all further progress, but left a full view of the tragedy which was enacting within, where the poor innocent wretch, suspended from a gibbet, writhed and shrieked at every stroke of the hide-whips of his tormentors.

In vain Philammon and the monks around him knocked and beat at the gates; they were only answered by laughter and taunts from the apparitors within, curses on the turbulent mob of Alexandria, with its patriarch, clergy, saints, and churches, and promises to each and all outside, that their turn would come next; while the piteous screams grew fainter and more faint, and at last, with a convulsive shudder, motion and suffering ceased for ever in the poor mangled body.

"They have killed him! Martyred him! Back to the archbishop! To the patriarch's house: he will avenge us!" And as the horrible news, and the watchword which followed it, passed outwards through the crowd, they wheeled round as one man, and poured through street after street towards Cyril's house; while Philammon, beside himself with horror, rage, and pity, hurried onward with them.

A tumultuous hour, or more, was passed in the street, before he could gain entrance; and then he was swept, along with the mob in which he had been fast wedged, through a dark low passage, and landed breathless in a quadrangle of mean and new buildings, overhung by the four hundred stately columns of the ruined Serapeium. The grass was already growing on the ruined capitals and architraves. . . . . Little did even its destroyers dream then, that the day would come when one only of that four hundred would be

left, as "Pompey's Pillar," to show what the men of old could think and do.

Philammon at last escaped from the crowd, and putting the letter which he had carried in his bosom into the hands of one of the priests who was mixing with the mob, was beckoned by him into a corridor, and up a flight of stairs, and into a large, low, mean room, and there, by virtue of the world-wide freemasonry which Christianity had, for the first time on earth, established, found himself in five minutes awaiting the summons of the most powerful man south of the Mediterranean.

A curtain hung across the door of the inner chamber, through which Philammon could hear plainly the steps of some one walking up and down hurriedly and fiercely.

"They will drive me to it!" at last burst out a deep sonorous voice. "They will drive me to it. . . . Their blood be on their own head! Is it not enough for them to blaspheme God and his church, to have the monopoly of all the cheating, fortune telling, usury, sorcery, and coining of the city, but they must deliver my clergy into the hands of the tyrant?"

"It was so even in the apostles' time," suggested a softer, but far more unpleasant voice.

"Then it shall be so no longer! God has given me the power to stop them; and God do so to me, and more also, if I do not use that power. To-morrow I sweep out this Augean stable of villany, and leave not a Jew to blaspheme and cheat in Alexandria."

"I am afraid such a judgment, however righteous, might offend his excellency?"

"His excellency! His tyranny! Why does Orestes truckle to these circumcised, but because they lend money to him and to his creatures? He would keep up a den of fiends in Alexandria if they would do as much for him! And then to play them off against me and mine, to bring Religion into contempt by setting the mob together by the ears, and to end with outrages like this! Seditious? Have they not cause enough? The sooner I remove one of their temptations, the better: let the other tempter beware, lest his judgment be at hand!"

"The prefect, your holiness?" asked the other voice, slily.

"Who spoke of the prefect? Whosoever is a tyrant, and a murderer, and an oppressor of the poor, and a favourer of the philosophy which despises and enslaves the poor, should not he perish, though he be seven times a prefect?"

At this juncture Philammon, thinking perhaps that he had already heard too much, notified his presence by some slight noise, at which the secretary, as he seemed to be, hastily lifted the curtain, and somewhat sharply demanded his business. The names of Pambo and Arsenius, however, seemed to pacify him at once; and the trembling youth was ushered into the presence of him who in reality, though not in name, sat on the throne of the Pharaohs.

Not, indeed, in their outward pomp; the furniture of the chamber was but a grade above that of the artisan's; the dress of the great man was coarse and simple; if personal vanity peeped out anywhere, it was in the careful arrangement of the bushy beard, and of the few curling locks which the tonsure had

spared. But the height and majesty of his figure, the stern and massive beauty of his features, the flashing eye, curling lip, and projecting brow — all marked him as one born to command. As the youth entered, Cyril stopped short in his walk, and looking him through and through, with a glance which burnt upon his cheeks like fire, and made him all but wish the kindly earth would open and hide him, took the letters, read them, and then began:

"Philammon. A Greek. You are said to have learned to obey. If so, you have also learned to rule. Your father-abbot has transferred you to my tutelage. You are now to obey me."

"And I will."

"Well said. Go to that window, then, and leap into the court."

Philammon walked to it, and opened it. The pavement was full twenty feet below; but his business was to obey, and not take measurements. There was a flower in a vase upon the sill. He quietly removed it, and in an instant more would have leapt, for life or death, when Cyril's voice thundered "Stop!"

"The lad will pass, my Peter. I shall not be afraid, now, for the secrets which he may have overheard."

Peter smiled assent, looking all the while as if he thought it a great pity that the young man had not been allowed to put talebearing out of his own power, by breaking his neck.

"You wish to see the world? Perhaps you have seen something of it to-day."

"I saw the murder —"

"Then you saw what you came hither to see;

what the world is, and what justice and mer
can deal out. You would not dislike to see
reprisals to man's tyranny? . . . Or to be a fe
worker with God therein, if I judge rightly by
looks?"

"I would avenge that man."

"Ah! my poor simple schoolmaster! And his
is the portent of portents to you now! Stay a
till you have gone with Ezekiel into the inner
bers of the devil's temple, and you will see
things than these — women weeping for Thar
bemoaning the decay of an idolatry which they
selves disbelieve — That, too, is on the list of
cules' labours, Peter mine."

At this moment a deacon entered. . . . . "
Holiness, the rabbis of the accursed nation are b
at your summons. We brought them in throug
back gate, for fear of —"

"Right, right. An accident to them might
ruined us. I shall not forget you. Bring ther
Peter, take this youth, introduce him to the pa
lani . . . . Who will be the best man for him to
under?"

"The brother Theopompus is especially sobe
gentle."

Cyril shook his head laughingly . . . . "Go
the next room, my son . . . . No, Peter, put him
some fiery saint, some true Boanerges, who will
him down, and work him to death, and show hi
best and the worst of everything. Cleitophon w
the man. Now then, let me see my engagements
minutes for these Jews — Orestes did not choo
frighten them: let us see whether Cyril cannot;

an hour to look over the hospital accounts; an hour for the schools; a half-hour for the reserved cases of distress; and another half-hour for myself; and then divine service. See that the boy is there. Do bring in every one in their turn, Peter mine. So much time goes in hunting for this man and that man . . . . and life is too short for all that. Where are these Jews?" and Cyril plunged into the latter half of his day's work with that untiring energy, self-sacrifice, and method which commanded for him, in spite of all suspicions of his violence, ambition, and intrigue, the loving awe and implicit obedience of several hundred thousand human beings.

So Philammon went out with the parabolani, a sort of organized guild of district visitors . . . . And in their company he saw that afternoon the dark side of that world, whereof the harbour-panorama had been the bright one. In squalid misery, filth, profligacy, ignorance, ferocity, discontent, neglected in body, house, and soul, by the civil authorities, proving their existence only in aimless and sanguinary riots, there they starved and rotted, heap on heap, the masses of the old Greek population, close to the great food-exporting harbour of the world. Among these, fiercely perhaps, and fanatically, but still among them, and for them, laboured those district visitors, night and day. And so Philammon toiled away with them, carrying food and clothing, helping sick to the hospital, and dead to the burial; cleaning out the infected houses — for the fever was all but perennial in those quarters — and comforting the dying with the good news of forgiveness from above; till the larger number had to return for evening service. He, however, was kept by

his superior, watching at a sick-bedside, and it was late at night before he got home, and was reported to Peter the Reader as having acquitted himself like "a man of God," as, indeed, without the least thought of doing anything noble or self-sacrificing, he had truly done, being a monk. And so he threw himself on a truckle bed, in one of the many cells which opened off a long corridor, and fell fast asleep in a minute.

He was just weltering about in a dreary dream-jumble of Goths dancing with district visitors, Pelagia as an angel, with peacock's wings; Hypatia with horns and cloven feet, riding three hippopotami at once round the theatre; Cyril standing at an open window, cursing frightfully, and pelting him with flower-pots; and a similar self-sown after crop of his day's impressions; when he was awakened by the tramp of hurried feet in the street outside, and shouts, which gradually, as he became conscious, shaped themselves into cries of "Alexander's church is on fire! Help, good Christians! Fire! Help!"

Whereat he sat up in his truckle-bed, tried to recollect where he was, and having with some trouble succeeded, threw on his sheepskin, and jumped up to ask the news from the deacons and monks who were hurrying along the corridor outside. "Yes, Alexander's church was on fire;" and down the stairs they poured, across the courtyard, and out into the street, Peter's tall figure serving as a standard and rallying-point.

As they rushed out through the gateway, Philammon, dazzled by the sudden transition from the darkness within to the blaze of moon and starlight which flooded the street, and walls, and shining roofs, hung back a moment. That hesitation probably saved

his life; for in an instant he saw a dark figure spring out of the shadow, a long knife flashed across his eyes, and a priest next to him sunk upon the pavement with a groan, while the assassin dashed off down the street, hotly pursued by monks and parabolani.

Philammon, who ran like a desert ostrich, had soon outstripped all but Peter, when several more dark figures sprang out of doorways and corners, and joined, or seemed to join, the pursuit. Suddenly, however, after running a hundred yards, they drew up opposite the mouth of a side street; the assassin stopped also. Peter, suspecting something wrong, slackened his pace, and caught Philammon's arm.

"Do you see those fellows in the shadow?"

But, before Philammon could answer, some thirty or forty men, their daggers gleaming in the moonlight, moved out into the middle of the street, and received the fugitives into their ranks. What was the meaning of it? Here was a pleasant taste of the ways of the most Christian and civilized city of the Empire!

"Well," thought Philammon, "I have come out to see the world, and I seem, at this rate, to be likely to see enough of it."

Peter turned at once, and fled as quickly as he had pursued; while Philammon, considering discretion the better part of valour, followed, and they rejoined their party, breathless.

"There is an armed mob at the end of the street."

"Assassins!" "Jews!" "A conspiracy!" Up rose a Babel of doubtful voices. The foe appeared in sight, advancing stealthily, and the whole party took to flight, led once more by Peter, who seemed determined to

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make free use, in behalf of his own safety, of the long legs which nature had given him.

Philammon followed, sulkily and unwillingly, at a foot's pace; but he had not gone a dozen yards when a pitiable voice at his feet called to him —

"Help! mercy! Do not leave me here to be murdered! I am a Christian; indeed I am a Christian!"

Philammon stooped, and lifted from the ground a comely negro-woman, weeping, and shivering in a few tattered remnants of clothing.

"I ran out when they said the church was on fire," sobbed the poor creature, "and the Jews beat and wounded me. They tore my shawl and tunic off me before I could get away from them; and then our own people ran over me, and trod me down. And now my husband will beat me, if I ever get home. Quick! up this side street, or we shall be murdered!"

The armed men, whosoever they were, were close on them. There was no time to be lost; and Philammon, assuring her that he would not desert her, hurried her up the side street which she pointed out. But the pursuers had caught sight of them, and while the mass held on up the main street, three or four turned aside and gave chase. The poor negress could only limp along, and Philammon, unarmed, looked back, and saw the bright steel points gleaming in the moonlight, and made up his mind to die as a monk should. Nevertheless, youth is hopeful. One chance for life! He thrust the negress into a dark doorway, where her colour hid her well enough, and had just time to ensconce himself behind a pillar, when the foremost pursuer reached him. He held his breath in fearful suspense. Should he be seen? He would not die

without a struggle, at least. No! the fellow ran on, panting. But in a minute more, another came up, saw him suddenly, and sprang aside startled. That start saved Philammon. Quick as a cat, he leapt upon him, felled him to the earth with a single blow, tore the dagger from his hand, and sprang to his feet again just in time to strike his new weapon full into the third pursuer's face. The man put his hand to his head, and recoiled against a fellow-ruffian, who was close on his heels. Philammon, flushed with victory, took advantage of the confusion, and before the worthy pair could recover, dealt them half-a-dozen blows which, luckily for them, came from an unpractised hand, or the young monk might have had more than one life to answer for. As it was, they turned and limped off, cursing in an unknown tongue; and Philammon found himself triumphant and alone, with the trembling negress and the prostrate ruffian, who, stunned by the blow and the fall, lay groaning on the pavement.

It was all over in a minute. . . . . The negress was kneeling under the gateway, pouring out her simple thanks to Heaven for this unexpected deliverance; and Philammon was about to kneel too, when a thought struck him; and coolly despoiling the Jew of his shawl and sash, he handed them over to the poor negress, considering them fairly enough as his own by right of conquest: but, lo and behold! as she was overwhelming him with thanks, a fresh mob poured into the street from the upper end, and were close on them before they were aware. . . . . A flush of terror and despair, ... and then a burst of joy, as, by mingled moonlight and torchlight, Philammon descried priestly robes, and in the fore-front of the battle — there being

no apparent danger — Peter the Reader, who seemed to be anxious to prevent inquiry, by beginning to talk as fast as possible.

"Ah, boy! Safe? The saints be praised! We gave you up for dead! Who have you here? A prisoner? And we have another. He ran right into our arms up the street, and the Lord delivered him into our hand. He must have passed you."

"So he did," said Philammon, dragging up his captive, "and here is his fellow-scoundrel." Whereon the two worthies were speedily tied together by the elbows; and the party marched on once more in search of Alexander's church, and the supposed conflagration.

Philammon looked round for the negress, but she had vanished. He was far too much ashamed of being known to have been alone with a woman to say anything about her. Yet he longed to see her again; an interest — even something like an affection — had already sprung up in his heart toward the poor simple creature whom he had delivered from death. Instead of thinking her ungrateful for not staying to tell what he had done for her, he was thankful to her for having saved his blushes, by disappearing so opportunely..... And he longed to tell her so — to know if she was hurt — to —. Oh, Philammon! only four days from the Laura, and a whole regiment of women acquaintances already! True, Providence having sent into the world about as many women as men, it may be difficult to keep out of their way altogether. Perhaps, too, Providence may have intended them to be of some use to that other sex, with whom it has so mixed them up. Don't argue, poor Philammon; Alexander's church is on fire! — forward!

And so they hurried on, a confused mass of monks and populace, with their hapless prisoners in the centre, who, hauled, cuffed, questioned, and cursed, by twenty self-elected inquisitors at once, thought fit, either from Jewish obstinacy, or sheer bewilderment, to give no account whatsoever of themselves.

As they turned the corner of a street, the folding-doors of a large gateway rolled open; a long lane of glittering figures poured across the road, dropped their spear-butts on the pavement with a single rattle, and remained motionless. The front rank of the mob recoiled; and an awe-struck whisper ran through them..... "The Stationaries!"

"Who are they?" asked Philammon, in a whisper.

"The soldiers — the Roman soldiers," answered a whisperer to him.

Philammon, who was among the leaders, had recoiled too — he hardly knew why — at that stern apparition. His next instinct was to press forward as close as he dared..... And these were Roman soldiers! — the conquerors of the world! — the men whose name had thrilled him from his childhood with vague awe and admiration, dimly heard of up there in the lonely Laura..... Roman soldiers! And here he was face to face with them at last!

His curiosity received a sudden check, however, as he found his arm seized by an officer, as he took him to be, from the gold ornaments on his helmet and cuirass, who lifted his vine-stock threateningly over the young monk's head, and demanded —

"What's all this about? Why are you not quietly in your beds, you Alexandrian rascals?"

"Alexander's church is on fire," answered Philammon, thinking the shortest answer the wisest.

"So much the better."

"And the Jews are murdering the Christians."

"Fight it out, then. Turn in, men, it's only a riot."

And the steel-clad apparition suddenly flashed round, and vanished, trampling and jingling into the dark jaws of the guardhouse-gate, while the stream, its temporary barrier removed, rushed on wilder than ever.

Philammon hurried on too with them, not without a strange feeling of disappointment. "Only a riot!" Peter was chuckling to his brothers over their cleverness in "having kept the prisoners in the middle, and stopped the rascals' mouths till they were past the guard-house." "A fine thing to boast of," thought Philammon, "in the face of the men who make and unmake kings and Cæsars!" "Only a riot!" He, and the corps of district visitors — whom he fancied the most august body on earth — and Alexander's Church, Christians murdered by Jews, persecution of the Catholic faith, and all the rest of it, was simply, then, not worth the notice of those forty men, alone and secure in the sense of power and discipline, among tens of thousands. . . . . He hated them, those soldiers. Was it because they were indifferent to the cause of the Church? . . . . or because they were indifferent to the cause of which he was inclined to think himself a not unimportant member, on the strength of his late Samsonic defeat of Jewish persecutors? At least, he obeyed the little porter's advice, and "felt very small indeed."

And he felt smaller still, being young and alive to ridicule, when, at some sudden ebb or flow, wave or wavelet, of the Babel sea, which weltered up and down every street, a shrill female voice informed them from an upper window, that Alexander's church was not on fire at all; that she had gone to the top of the house, as they might have gone, if they had not been fools, &c. &c.; and that it "looked as safe and as ugly as ever;" wherewith, a brickbat or two having been sent up in answer, she shut the blinds, leaving them to halt, inquire, discover gradually and piecemeal, after the method of mobs, they had been following the nature of mobs; that no one had seen the church on fire, or seen any one else who had seen the same, or even seen any light in the sky in any quarter, or knew who raised the cry; or — or — in short, Alexander's church was two miles off; if it was on fire, it was either burnt down or saved by this time; if not, the night-air was, to say the least, chilly: and, whether it was or not, there were ambuscades of Jews — Satan only knew how strong — in every street between them and it..... Might it not be better to secure their two prisoners, and then ask for further orders from the archbishop? Wherewith, after the manner of mobs, they melted off the way they came, by twos and threes, till those of a contrary opinion began to find themselves left alone, and having a strong dislike to Jewish daggers, were fain to follow the stream.

With a panic or two, a cry of "The Jews are on us!" and a general rush in every direction, (in which one or two, seeking shelter from the awful nothing in neighbouring houses, were handed over to the watch as burglars, and sent to the quarries accordingly,) they

reached the Serapeium, and there found, of course, a counter-mob collected to inform them that they had been taken in — that Alexander's church had never been on fire at all — that the Jews had murdered a thousand Christians at least, though three dead bodies, including the poor priest who lay in the house within, were all of the thousand who had yet been seen — and that the whole Jews' quarter was marching upon them. At which news, it was considered advisable to retreat into the archbishop's house as quickly as possible, barricade the doors, and prepare for a siege — a work at which Philammon performed prodigies, tearing woodwork from the rooms, and stones from the parapets, before it struck some of the more sober-minded that it was as well to wait for some more decided demonstration of attack before incurring so heavy a carpenter's bill of repairs.

At last the heavy tramp of footsteps was heard coming down the street, and every window was crowded in an instant with eager heads; while Peter rushed down stairs to heat the large coppers, having some experience in the defensive virtues of boiling water. The bright moon glittered on a long line of helmets and cuirasses. Thank Heaven! it was the soldiery.

"Are the Jews coming?" "Is the city quiet?" "Why did not you prevent this villany?" "A thousand citizens murdered while you have been snoring!" — and a volley of similar ejaculations, greeted the soldiers as they passed, and were answered by a cool — "To your perches, and sleep, you noisy chickens, or we'll set the coop on fire about your ears!"

A yell of defiance answered this polite speech, and

the soldiery, who knew perfectly well that the unarmed ecclesiastics within were not to be trifled with, and had no ambition to die by coping-stones and hot water, went quietly on their way.

All danger was now past; and the cackling rose jubilant, louder than ever, and might have continued till daylight, had not a window in the courtyard been suddenly thrown open, and the awful voice of Cyril commanded silence.

"Every man sleep where he can. I shall want you at daybreak. The superiors of the parabolani are to come up to me with the two prisoners, and the men who took them."

In a few minutes Philammon found himself, with some twenty others, in the great man's presence: he was sitting at his desk, writing, quietly, small notes on slips of paper.

"Here is the youth who helped me to pursue the murderer, and, having outrun me, was attacked by the prisoners," said Peter. "My hands are clean from blood, I thank the Lord!"

"Three set on me with daggers," said Philammon, apologetically, "and I was forced to take this one's dagger away, and beat off the two others with it."

Cyril smiled, and shook his head.

"Thou art a brave boy; but hast thou not read, 'If a man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other?'"

"I could not run away, as Master Peter and the rest did."

"So you ran away, eh? my worthy friend?"

"Is it not written," asked Peter, in his blandest

tone, "'If they persecute you in one city, flee unto another?'"

Cyril smiled again. "And why could not you run away, boy?"

Philammon blushed scarlet, but he dared not lie. "There was a — a poor black woman, wounded and trodden down, and I dare not leave her, for she told me she was a Christian."

"Right, my son, right. I shall remember this. What was her name?"

"I did not hear it. — Stay, I think she said Judith."

"Ah! the wife of the porter who stands at the lecture-room door, which God confound! A devout woman, full of good works, and sorely ill-treated by her heathen husband. Peter, thou shalt go to her to-morrow with the physician, and see if she is in need of anything. Boy, thou hast done well. Cyril never forgets. Now bring up those Jews. Their Rabbis were with me two hours ago promising peace: and this is the way they have kept their promise. So be it. The wicked is snared in his own wickedness."

The Jews were brought in, but kept a stubborn silence.

"Your holiness perceives," said some one, "that they have each of them rings of green palm-bark on their right hand."

"A very dangerous sign! An evident conspiracy!" commented Peter.

"Ah? What does that mean, you rascals? Answer me, as you value your lives."

"You have no business with us: we are Jews, and none of your people," said one, sulkily.

"None of my people? You have murdered my

people! None of my people! Every soul in Alexandria is mine, if the kingdom of God means anything; and you shall find it out. I shall not argue with you, my good friends, any more than I did with your Rabbis. Take these fellows away, Peter, and lock them up in the fuel-cellar, and see that they are guarded. If any man lets them go, his life shall be for the life of them."

And the two worthies were let out.

"Now, my brothers, here are your orders. You will divide these notes among yourselves, and distribute them to trusty and godly catholics in your districts. Wait one hour, till the city be quiet; and then start, and raise the church. I must have thirty thousand men by sunrise."

"What for, your holiness?" asked a dozen voices.

"Read your notes. Whosoever will fight to-morrow under the banner of the Lord, shall have free plunder of the Jews' quarter, outrage and murder only forbidden. As I have said it, God do so to me, and more also, if there be a Jew left in Alexandria by to-morrow at noon. Go."

And the staff of orderlies filed out, thanking Heaven that they had a leader so prompt and valiant, and spent the next hour over the hall fire, eating millet cakes, drinking bad beer, likening Cyril to Barak, Gideon, Samson, Jephtha, Judas Maccabeus, and all the worthies of the Old Testament, and then started on their pacific errand.

Philammon was about to follow them, when Cyril stopped him.

"Stay, my son; you are young and rash, and do not know the city. Lie down here and sleep in the

anteroom. Three hours hence the sun rises, and we go forth against the enemies of the Lord."

Philammon threw himself on the floor in a corner, and slumbered like a child, till he was awakened in the grey dawn by one of the parabolani.

"Up, boy! and see what we can do. Cyril goes down greater than Barak, the son of Abinoam, not with ten, but with thirty thousand men at his feet!"

"Ay, my brothers!" said Cyril, as he passed proudly out in full pontificals, with a gorgeous retinue of priests and deacons — "the Catholic church has her organization, her unity, her common cause, her watchwords, such as the tyrants of the earth, in their weakness and their divisions, may envy and tremble at, but cannot imitate. Could Orestes raise, in three hours, thirty thousand men, who would die for him?"

"As we will for you!" shouted many voices.

"Say for the kingdom of God." And he passed out.

And so ended Philammon's first day in Alexandria.

CHAPTER VI.

The New Diogenes.

About five o'clock the next morning, Raphael Aben-Ezra was lying in bed, alternately yawning over a manuscript of Philo Judæus, pulling the ears of his huge British mastiff, watching the sparkle of the fountain in the court outside, wondering when that lazy boy would come to tell him that the bath was warmed, and meditating, half aloud. . . . .

"Alas! poor me! Here I am, back again — just at the point from which I started! . . . . How am I to get free from that heathen Siren? Plagues on her! I shall end by falling in love with her. . . . . I don't know that I have not got a barb of the blind boy in me already. I felt absurdly glad the other day when that fool told me he dare not accept her modest offer! Ha! ha! A delicious joke it would have been to have seen Orestes bowing down to stocks and stones, and Hypatia installed in the ruins of the Serapeium, as High Priestess of the Abomination of Desolation! . . . . And now . . . . Well: I call all heaven and earth to witness, that I have fought valiantly. I have faced naughty little Eros like a man, rod in hand. What could a poor human being do more than try to marry her to some one else, in hopes of sickening himself of the whole matter? Well, every moth has its candle, and every

man his destiny. But the daring of the little fool! What huge imaginations she has! She might be another Zenobia, now, with Orestes as Odenatus, and Raphael Aben-Ezra to play the part of Longinus .... and receive Longinus's salary of axe or poison. She don't care for me; she would sacrifice me, or a thousand of me, the cold-blooded fanatical archangel that she is, to water with our blood the foundation of some new temple of cast rags and broken dolls .... Oh, Raphael Aben-Ezra, what a fool you are. .... You know you are going off as usual to her lecture, this very morning!"

At this crisis of his confessions the page entered, and announced, not the bath, but Miriam.

The old woman, who, in virtue of her profession, had the private entry of all fashionable chambers in Alexandria, came in hurriedly; and instead of seating herself as usual, for a gossip, remained standing, and motioned the boy out of the room.

"Well, my sweet mother? Sit: Ah! I see! You rascal, you have brought in no wine for the lady. Don't you know her little ways yet?"

"Eos has got it at the door, of course," answered the boy with a saucy air of offended virtue.

"Out with you, imp of Satan!" cried Miriam. "This is no time for wine-bibbing. Raphael Aben-Ezra, why are you lying here? Did you not receive a note last night?"

"A note? So I did: but I was too sleepy to read it. There it lies. Boy, bring it here. .... What's this? A scrap out of Jeremiah? 'Arise, and flee for thy life, for evil is determined against the whole house of Israel!' — Does this come from the chief rabbi? I

always took the venerable father for a sober man. . . . Eh, Miriam?"

"Fool! instead of laughing at the sacred words of the prophets, get up and obey them. I sent you the note."

"Why can't I obey them in bed? Here I am, reading hard at the Cabbala, or Philo — who is stupider still — and what more would you have?"

The old woman, unable to restrain her impatience, literally ran at him, gnashing her teeth, and, before he was aware, dragged him out of bed upon the floor, where he stood meekly wondering what would come next.

"Many thanks, mother, for having saved me the one daily torture of life — getting out of bed by one's own exertion."

"Raphael Aben-Ezra! are you so besotted with your philosophy and your heathenry, and your laziness, and your contempt for God and man, that you will see your nation given up for a prey, and your wealth plundered by heathen dogs? I tell you Cyril has sworn that God shall do so to him, and more also, if there be a Jew left in Alexandria by to-morrow about this time."

"So much the better for the Jews, then, if they are half as tired of this noisy Pandemonium as I am. But how can I help it? Am I Queen Esther, to go to Ahasuerus there in the prefect's palace, and get him to hold out the golden sceptre to me?"

"Fool! if you had read that note last night, you might have gone and saved us, and your name would have been handed down for ever from generation to generation as a second Mordecai."

"My dear mother, Ahasuerus would have been either fast asleep, or far too drunk to listen to me. Why did you not go yourself?"

"Do you suppose that I would not have gone if I could? Do you fancy me a sluggard like yourself? At the risk of my life I have got hither in time, if there be time to save you."

"Well: shall I dress? What can be done now?"

"Nothing! The streets are blockaded by Cyril's mob — There! do you hear the shouts and screams? They are attacking the further part of the quarter already."

"What! are they murdering them?" asked Raphael throwing on his pelisse. "Because, if it has really come to a practical joke of that kind, I shall have the greatest pleasure in employing a counter-irritant. Here, boy! My sword and dagger! Quick!"

"No, the hypocrites! No blood is to be shed, they say, if we make no resistance, and let them pillage. Cyril and his monks are there, to prevent outrage, and so forth. . . . . The Angel of the Lord scatter them."

The conversation was interrupted by the rushing in of the whole household, in an agony of terror; and Raphael, at last thoroughly roused, went to a window which looked into the street. The thoroughfare was full of scolding women and screaming children; while men, old and young, looked on at the plunder of their property with true Jewish doggedness, too prudent to resist, but too manful to complain; while furniture came flying out of every window, and from door after door poured a stream of rascality, carrying off money, jewels, silks, and all the treasures which Jewish usury had accumulated during many a genera-

tion. But unmoved amid the roaring sea of plunderers and plundered, stood, scattered up and down, Cyril's spiritual police, enforcing, by a word, an obedience which the Roman soldiers could only have compelled by hard blows of the spear-butt. There was to be no outrage, and no outrage there was; and more than once some man in priestly robes hurried through the crowd, leading by the hand, tenderly enough, a lost child in search of its parents.

Raphael stood watching silently, while Miriam, who had followed him up stairs, paced the room in an ecstasy of rage, calling vainly to him to speak or act.

"Let me alone, mother," he said, at last. "It will be full ten minutes more before they pay me a visit, and in the mean time what can one do better than watch the progress of this, the little Exodus?"

"Not like that first one! Then we went forth with cymbals and songs to the Red Sea triumph! Then we borrowed, every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment."

"And now we pay them back again; . . . . it is but fair, after all. We ought to have listened to Jeremiah a thousand years ago, and never gone back again, like fools, into a country to which we were so deeply in debt."

"Accursed land!" cried Miriam. "In an evil hour our forefathers disobeyed the prophet; and now we reap the harvest of our sins! — Our sons have forgotten the faith of their forefathers for the philosophy of the Gentiles, and fill their chambers" (with a contemptuous look round) "with heathen imagery; and our daughters are — Look there!"

As she spoke, a beautiful girl rushed shrieking out of an adjoining house, followed by some half-drunk ruffian, who was clutching at the gold chains and trinkets with which she was profusely bedecked, after the fashion of Jewish women. The rascal had just seized with one hand her streaming black tresses, and with the other a heavy collar of gold, which was wound round her throat, when a priest, stepping up, laid a quiet hand upon his shoulder. The fellow, too maddened to obey, turned, and struck back the restraining arm .... and in an instant was felled to the earth by a young monk. ....

"Touchest thou the Lord's anointed, sacrilegious wretch?" cried the man of the desert, as the fellow dropped on the pavement, with his booty in his hand.

The monk tore the gold necklace from his grasp, looked at it for a moment with childish wonder, as a savage might at some incomprehensible product of civilized industry, and then, spitting on it in contempt, dashed it on the ground, and trampled it into the mud.

"Follow the golden wedge of Achan, and the silver of Iscariot, thou root of all evil!" And he rushed on, yelling, "Down with the circumcision! Down with the blasphemers!" — while the poor girl vanished among the crowd.

Raphael watched him with a quaint, thoughtful smile, while Miriam shrieked aloud at the destruction of the precious trumpery.

"The monk is right, mother. If those Christians go on upon that method, they must beat us. It has been our ruin from the first, our fancy for loading ourselves with the thick clay."

What will you do?" cried Miriam, clutching him by the arm.

"What will you do?"

"I am safe. I have a boat waiting for me on the canal at the garden gate, and in Alexandria I stay; no Christian hound shall make old Miriam move a foot against her will. My jewels are all buried — my girls all sold; save what you can, and come with me!"

"My sweet mother, why so peculiarly solicitous about my welfare, above that of all the sons of Judah?"

"Because — because — No, I'll tell you that another time. But I loved your mother, and she loved me. Come!"

Raphael relapsed into silence for a few minutes, and watched the tumult below.

"How those Christian priests keep their men in order! There is no use resisting destiny. They are the strong men of the time, after all; and the little Exodus must needs have its course. Miriam, daughter of Jonathan ——"

"I am no man's daughter! I have neither father nor mother, husband nor —— Call me mother again!"

"Whatsoever I am to call you, there are jewels enough in that closet to buy half Alexandria. Take them. I am going."

"With me?"

"Out into the wide world, my dear lady. I am bored with riches. That young savage of a monk understood them better than we Jews do. I shall just make a virtue of necessity, and turn beggar."

"Beggar?"

"Why not? Don't argue. These scoundrels will make me one, whether I like or not; so forth I go.

There will be few leave takings. This brute of a dog is the only friend I have on earth; and I love her, because she has the true old, dogged, spiteful, cunning, obstinate Maccabee spirit in her — of which if we had a spark left in us just now, there would be no little Exodus; eh, Bran, my beauty?"

"You can escape with me to the prefect's, and save the mass of your wealth."

"Exactly what I don't want to do. I hate that prefect as I hate a dead camel, or the vulture who eats him. And to tell the truth, I am growing a great deal too fond of that heathen woman there" —

"What?" shrieked the old woman — "Hypatia?"

"If you choose. At all events the easiest way to cut the knot is to expatriate. I shall beg my passage on board the first ship to Cyrene, and go and study life in Italy with Heraclian's expedition. Quick — take the jewels, and breed fresh troubles for yourself with them. I am going. My liberators are battering the outer door already."

Miriam greedily tore out of the closet diamonds and pearls, rubies and emeralds, and concealed them among her ample robes — "Go! go! Escape from her! I will hide your jewels!"

"Ay, hide them, as mother earth does all things, in that all-embracing bosom. You will have doubled them before we meet again, no doubt. Farewell, mother!"

"But not for ever, Raphael! not for ever! Promise me, in the name of the four archangels, that if you are in trouble or danger, you will write to me, at the house of Eudaimon."

"The little porter philosopher, who hangs about Hypatia's lecture-room?"

"The same, the same. He will give me your letter, and I swear to you, I will cross the mountains of Kaf to deliver you! — I will pay you all back. By Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob I swear! May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not account to you for the last penny!"

"Don't commit yourself to rash promises, my dear lady. If I am bored with poverty, I can but borrow a few gold pieces of a rabbi, and turn pedler. I really do not trust you to pay me back, so I shall not be disappointed if you do not. Why should I?"

"Because — because — Oh, God! No — never mind! You shall have all back. Spirit of Elias! where is the black agate? Why is it not among these? — The broken half of the black agate talisman?"

Raphael turned pale. "How did you know that I have a black agate?"

"How did I? How did I not?" cried she, clutching him by the arm. "Where is it? All depends on that! Fool!" she went on, throwing him off from her at arm's length, as a sudden suspicion stung her — "you have not given it to the heathen woman?"

"By the soul of my fathers, then, you mysterious old witch, who seem to know everything, that is exactly what I have done."

Miriam clapped her hands together wildly. "Lost! lost! lost! No! I will have it, if I tear it out of her heart! I will be avenged of her — the strange woman who flatters with her words, to whom the simple go in, and know not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell! God do so to me, and

more also; if she and her sorceries be on earth a twelvemonth hence!"

"Silence, Jezebel! Heathen or none, she is as pure as the sunlight! I only gave it her because she fancied the talisman upon it."

"To enchant you with it, to your ruin!"

"Brute of a slave-dealer! you fancy every one as base as the poor wretches whom you buy and sell to shame, that you may make them as much the children of hell, if that be possible, as yourself!"

Miriam looked at him, her large black eyes widening and kindling. For an instant she felt for her poniard — and then burst into an agony of tears, hid her face in her withered hands, and rushed from the room, as a crash and shout below announced the bursting of the door.

"There she goes, with my jewels. And here come my guests, with the young monk at their head. — One rising when the other sets. A worthy pair of Dioscuri! Come, Bran! .... Boys! Slaves! Where are you? Steal every one what he can lay his hands on, and run for your lives through the back gate."

The slaves had obeyed him already. He walked smiling down stairs through utter solitude, and in the front passage, met face to face the mob of monks, costermongers and dock-workers, fishwives and beggars, who where thronging up the narrow entry, and bursting into the doors right and left; and at their head, alas! the young monk who had just trampled the necklace into the mud . . . no other, in fact, than Philammon.

"Welcome, my worthy guests! Enter, I beseech you, and fulfil, in your own peculiar way, the precepts

which bid you not be over-anxious for the good things of this life. . . . . For eating and drinking, my kitchen and cellar are at your service. For clothing, if any illustrious personage will do me the honour to change his holy rags with me, here are an Indian shawl-pelisse and a pair of silk trousers at his service. Perhaps you will accommodate me, my handsome young captain, choragus of this new school of the prophets?"

Philammon, who was the person addressed, tried to push by him contemptuously.

"Allow me, sir. I lead the way. This dagger is poisoned, — a scratch and you are dead. This dog is of the true British breed; if she seizes you, red-hot iron will not loose her, till she hears the bone crack. If any one will change clothes with me, all I have is at your service. If not, the first that stirs is a dead man."

There was no mistaking the quiet high-bred determination of the speaker. Had he raged and blustered, Philammon could have met him on his own ground: but there was an easy self-possessed disdain about him, which utterly abashed the young monk, and abashed, too, the whole crowd of rascals at his heels.

"I'll change clothes with you, you Jewish dog!" roared a dirty fellow out of the mob.

"I am your eternal debtor. Let us step into this side room. Walk up stairs, my friends. Take care, there, sir! — That porcelain, whole, is worth three thousand gold pieces; broken, it is not three pence. I leave it to your good sense to treat it accordingly. Now then, my friend!" And in the midst of the raging vortex of plunderers, who were snatching up everything which they could carry away, and breaking

everything which they could not, he quietly divested himself of his finery, and put on the ragged cotton tunic, and battered straw hat, which the fellow handed over to him.

Philammon, who had had from the first no mind to plunder, stood watching Raphael with dumb wonder; and a shudder of regret, he knew not why, passed through him, as he saw the mob tearing down pictures, and dashing statues to the ground. Heathen they were, doubtless, but still, the Nymphs and Venuses looked too lovely to be so brutally destroyed. . . . There was something almost humanly pitiful in their poor broken arms and legs, as they lay about upon the pavement. . . . He laughed at himself for the notion; but he could not laugh it away.

Raphael seemed to think that he ought not to laugh it away; for he pointed to the fragments, and with a quaint look at the young monk —

"Our nurses used to tell us,

> If you can't make it
> You ought not to break it."

"I had no nurse," said Philammon.

"Ah! — that accounts — for this and other things. Well," he went on, with the most provoking good-nature, "you are in a fair road, my handsome youth; I wish you joy of your fellow-workmen, and of your apprenticeship in the noble art of monkery. Riot and pillage, shrieking women and houseless children in your twentieth summer, are the sure path to a saintship, such as Paul of Tarsus, who, with all his eccentricities, was a gentleman, certainly never contemplated. I have

heard of Phœbus Apollo under many disguises, but this is the first time I ever saw him in the wolf's hide."

"Or in the lion's," said Philammon, trying in his shame to make a fine speech.

"Like the Ass in the Fable. Farewell! Stand out of the way, friends! 'Ware teeth and poison!"

And he disappeared among the crowd, who made way respectfully enough for his dagger and his brindled companion.

CHAPTER VII.

Those by whom offences come.

PHILAMMON'S heart smote him all that day, whenever he thought of his morning's work. Till then all Christians, monks above all, had been infallible in his eyes: all Jews and heathens insane and accursed. Moreover, meekness under insult, fortitude in calamity, the contempt of worldly comfort, the worship of poverty as a noble estate, were virtues which the Church Catholic boasted as her peculiar heritage: on which side had the balance of those qualities inclined that morning? The figure of Raphael, stalking out ragged and penniless into the wide world, haunted him, with its quiet self-assured smile. And there haunted him, too, another peculiarity in the man, which he had never before remarked in any one but Arsenius — that ease and grace, that courtesy and self-restraint, which made Raphael's rebukes rankle all the more keenly, because he felt that the rebuker was in some mysterious way superior to him, and saw through him, and could have won him over, or crushed him in argument, or in intrigue — or in anything, perhaps, except mere brute force. Strange — that Raphael, of all men, should in those few moments have reminded him so much of Arsenius; and that the very same qualities which gave a peculiar charm to the latter should give a peculiar

unloveliness to the former, and yet be, without a doubt, the same. What was it? Was it rank which gave it? Arsenius had been a great man, he knew — the companion of kings. And Raphael seemed rich. He had heard the mob crying out against the prefect for favouring him. Was it then familiarity with the great ones of the world which produced this manner and tone? It was a real strength, whether in Arsenius or in Raphael. He felt humbled before it — envied it. If it made Arsenius a more complete and more captivating person, why should it not do the same for him? Why should not he, too, have his share of it?

Bringing with it such thoughts as these, the time ran on till noon, and the midday meal, and the afternoon's work, to which Philammon looked forward joyfully, as a refuge from his own thoughts.

He was sitting on his sheepskin upon a step, basking, like a true son of the desert, in a blaze of fiery sunshine, which made the black stonework too hot to touch with the bare hand, watching the swallows as they threaded the columns of the Serapeium, and thinking how often he had delighted in their air-dance, as they turned and hawked up and down the dear old glen at Scetis. A crowd of citizens with causes, appeals, and petitions, were passing in and out from the patriarch's audience-room. Peter and the archdeacon were waiting in the shade close by, for the gathering of the parabolani, and talking over the morning's work in an earnest whisper, in which the names of Hypatia and Orestes were now and then audible.

An old priest came up, and bowing reverently enough to the archdeacon, requested the help of one of the parabolani. He had a sailor's family, all

fever-stricken, who must be removed to the hospital at once.

The archdeacon looked at him, answered an off-hand "Very well," and went on with his talk.

The priest, bowing lower than before, represented the immediate necessity for help.

"It is very odd," said Peter to the swallows in the Serapeium, "that some people cannot obtain influence enough in their own parishes to get the simplest good works performed without tormenting his holiness the patriarch."

The old priest mumbled some sort of excuse, and the archdeacon, without deigning a second look at him, said — "Find him a man, brother Peter. Anybody will do. What is that boy — Philammon — doing there? Let him go with Master Hieracas."

Peter seemed not to receive the proposition favourably, and whispered something to the archdeacon . . . .

"No. I can spare none of the rest. Importunate persons must take their chance of being well served. Come — here are our brethren; we will all go together."

"The further together the better for the boy's sake," grumbled Peter, loud enough for Philammon — perhaps for the old priest — to overhear him.

So Philammon went out with them, and as he went questioned his companions, meekly enough, as to who Raphael was.

"A friend of Hypatia!" — that name, too, haunted him; and he began, as stealthily and indirectly as he could, to obtain information about her. There was no

need for his caution; for the very mention of her name roused the whole party into a fury of execration.

"May God confound her, siren, enchantress, dealer in spells and sorceries! She is the strange woman of whom Solomon prophesied."

"It is my opinion," said another, "that she is the forerunner of Antichrist."

"Perhaps the virgin of whom it is prophesied that he will be born," suggested another.

"Not that, I'll warrant her," said Peter, with a savage sneer.

"And is Raphael Aben-Ezra her pupil in philosophy?" asked Philammon.

"Her pupil in whatsoever she can find wherewith to delude men's souls," said the old priest. "The reality of philosophy has died long ago, but the great ones find it still worth their while to worship its shadow."

"Some of them worship more than a shadow, when they haunt her house," said Peter. "Do you think Orestes goes thither only for philosophy?"

"We must not judge harsh judgments," said the old priest; "Synesius of Cyrene is a holy man, and yet he loves Hypatia well."

"He a holy man? — and keeps a wife? One who had the insolence to tell the blessed Theophilus himself that he would not be made bishop unless he were allowed to remain with her; and despised the gift of the Holy Ghost in comparison of the carnal joys of wedlock, not knowing the Scriptures, which saith that those who are in the flesh cannot please God! Well said Siricius of Rome of such men — 'Can the Holy Spirit of God dwell in other than holy bodies?' No

wonder that such a one as Synesius grovels at the feet of Orestes' mistress!"

"Then she is profligate?" asked Philammon.

"She must be. Has a heathen faith and grace? And without faith and grace, are not all our righteousnesses as filthy rags? What says St. Paul? — That God has given them over to a reprobate mind, full of all injustice, uncleanness, covetousness, maliciousness, you know the catalogue — why do you ask me?"

"Alas! and is she this?"

"Alas! — And why alas? How would the Gospel be glorified if heathens were holier than Christians? It ought to be so, therefore it is so. If she seems to have virtues, they, being done without the grace of Christ, are only bedizened vices, cunning shams, the devil transformed into an angel of light. And as for chastity, the flower and crown of all virtues — whosoever says that she, being yet a heathen, has that, blasphemes the Holy Spirit, whose peculiar and highest gift it is, and is anathema maranatha for ever! Amen!" And Peter, devoutly crossing himself, turned angrily and contemptuously away from his young companion.

Philammon was quite shrewd enough to see that assertion was not identical with proof. But Peter's argument of "it ought to be, therefore it is," is one which saves a great deal of trouble . . . . and no doubt he had very good sources of information. So Philammon walked on, sad, he knew not why, at the new notion which he had formed of Hypatia, as a sort of awful sorceress-Messalina, whose den was foul with magic rites and ruined souls of men. And yet if that was all she had to teach, whence had her pupil Raphael

learned that fortitude of his? If philosophy had, as they said, utterly died out, then what was Raphael?

Just then, Peter and the rest turned up a side street, and Philammon and Hieracas were left to go on their joint errand together. They paced on for some way in silence, up one street and down another, till Philammon, for want of anything better to say, asked where they were going?

"Where I choose, at all events. No, young man! If I, a priest, am to be insulted by archdeacons and readers, I wont be insulted by you."

"I assure you I meant no harm."

"Of course not; you all learn the same trick, and the young ones catch it of the old ones fast enough. Words smoother than butter, yet very swords."

"You do not mean to complain of the archdeacon and his companions?" said Philammon, who of course was boiling over with pugnacious respect for the body to which he belonged.

No answer.

"Why, sir, are they not among the most holy and devoted of men?"

"Ah — yes," said his companion, in a tone which sounded very like "Ah — no."

"You do not think so?" asked Philammon, bluntly.

"You are young, you are young. Wait a while till you have seen as much as I have. A degenerate age this, my son; not like the good old times, when men dare suffer and die for the faith. We are too prosperous nowadays; and fine ladies walk about with Magdalens embroidered on their silks, and gospels hanging round their necks. When I was young they

died for that, with which they now bedizen themselves."

"But I was speaking of the parabolani."

"Ah, there are a great many among them who have not much business where they are. Don't say I said so. But many a rich man puts his name on the list of the guild just to get his exemption from taxes, and leaves the work to poor men like you. Rotten, rotten! my son, and you will find it out. The preachers, now — people used to say — I know Abbot Isidore did — that I had as good a gift for expounding as any man in Pelusium; but since I came here, eleven years since, if you will believe it, I had never been asked to preach in my own parish church."

"You surely jest!"

"True, as I am a christened man. I know why — I know why: they are afraid of Isidore's men here .... Perhaps they may have caught the holy man's trick of plain speaking — and ears are dainty in Alexandria. And there are some in these parts, too, that have never forgiven him the part he took about those three villains, Maro, Zosimus, and Martinian, and a certain letter that came of it; or another letter either, which we know of, about taking alms for the church from the gains of robbers and usurers. 'Cyril never forgets.' So he says to every one who does him a good turn. . . . And so he does to every one who he fancies has done him a bad one. So here am I slaving away, a subordinate priest, while such fellows as Peter the reader look down on me as their slave. But it's always so. There never was a bishop yet, except the blessed Augustine — would to Heaven I had taken my abbot's advice, and gone to him at Hippo! — who

had not his flatterers and his talebearers, and generally the archdeacon at the head of them, ready to step into the bishop's place when he dies, over the heads of hard-working parish priests. But that is the way of the world. The sleekest and the oiliest, and the noisiest; the man who can bring in most money to the charities, never mind whence or how; the man who will take most of the bishop's work off his hands, and agree with him in everything he wants, and save him, by spying and eavesdropping, the trouble of using his own eyes; that is the man to succeed in Alexandria, or Constantinople, or Rome itself. Look now; there are but seven deacons to this great city, and all its priests; and they and the archdeacon are the masters of it and us. They and that Peter manage Cyril's work for him, and when Cyril makes the archdeacon a bishop, he will make Peter archdeacon. . . . They have their reward, they have their reward; and so has Cyril, for that matter."

"How?"

"Why, don't say I said it. But what do I care? I have nothing to lose, I'm sure, here. But they do say that there are two ways of promotion in Alexandria: one by deserving it, the other by paying for it. That's all."

"Impossible!"

"Oh, of course, quite impossible. But all I know is just this, that when that fellow Martinian got back again into Pelusium, after being turned out by the late bishop for a rogue and hypocrite as he was, and got the ear of this present bishop, and was appointed his steward, and ordained priest — I'd as soon have ordained that street-dog — and plundered him, and

brought him to disgrace — for I don't believe this bishop is a bad man, but those who use rogues must expect to be called rogues — and ground the poor to the earth, and tyrannized over the whole city so that no man's property, or reputation, scarcely their lives, were safe; and after all, had the impudence, when he was called on for his accounts, to bring the church in as owing him money; I just know this, that he added to all his other shamelessness this, that he offered the patriarch a large sum of money to buy a bishopric of him. . . . And what do you think the patriarch answered?"

"Excommunicated the sacrilegious wretch, of course!"

"Sent him a letter to say that if he dared to do such a thing again he should really be forced to expose him! So the fellow, taking courage, brought his money himself the next time; and all the world says that Cyril would have made him a bishop after all, if Abbot Isidore had not written to remonstrate."

"He could not have known the man's character," said poor Philammon, hunting for an excuse.

"The whole Delta was ringing with it. Isidore had written to him again and again."

"Surely, then, his wish was to prevent scandal, and preserve the unity of the church in the eyes of the heathen."

The old man laughed bitterly.

"Ah, the old story — of preventing scandals by retaining them, and fancying that sin is a less evil than a little noise; as if the worst of all scandals was not the being discovered in hushing up a scandal.

And as for unity, if you want that, you must go back to the good old times of Diocletian and Decius."

"The persecutors?"

"Ay, boy — to the times of persecution, when Christians died like brothers, because they lived like brothers. You will see very little of that now, except in some little remote county bishopric, which no one ever hears of from year's end to year's end. But in the cities, it is all one great fight for place and power. Every one is jealous of his neighbour. The priests are jealous of the deacons, and good cause they have. The county bishops are jealous of the metropolitan, and he is jealous of the North African bishops, and quite right he is. What business have they to set up for themselves, as if they were infallible? It's a schism, I say — a complete schism. They are just as bad as their own Donatists. Did not the Council of Nice settle that the Metropolitan of Alexandria should have authority over Libya and Pentapolis, according to the ancient custom?"

"Of course he ought," said Philammon, jealous for the honour of his own patriarchate.

"And the patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople are jealous of our patriarch."

"Of Cyril?"

"Of course, because he won't be at their beck and nod, and let them be lords and masters of Africa."

"But surely these things can be settled by councils?"

"Councils? Wait till you have been at one. The blessed Abbot Isidore used to say, that if he ever was a bishop — which he never will be — he is far too honest for that, — he would never go near one of

them; for he never had seen one which did not call out every evil passion in men's hearts, and leave the question more confounded with words than they found it, even if the whole matter was not settled beforehand by some chamberlain, or eunuch, or cook sent from court, as if he were an anointed vessel of the Spirit, to settle the dogmas of the Holy Catholic Church."

"Cook?"

"Why, Valens sent his chief cook to stop Basil of Cæsarea from opposing the Court doctrine. . . . I tell you, the great battle in these cases is to get votes from courts, or to get to court yourself. When I was young, the council of Antioch had to make a law to keep bishops from running off to Constantinople to intrigue, under pretence of pleading the cause of the orphan and widow. But what's the use of that, when every noisy and ambitious man shifts and shifts, from one see to another, till he settles himself close to Rome or Byzantium, and gets the Emperor's ear, and plays into the hands of his courtiers?"

"Is it not written, 'Speak not evil of dignities?'" said Philammon, in his most sanctimonious tone.

"Well, what of that? I don't speak evil of dignities, when I complain of the men who fill them badly, do I?"

"I never heard that interpretation of the text before."

"Very likely not. That's no reason why it should not be true and orthodox. You will soon hear a good many more things, which are true enough — though whether they are orthodox or not, the court cooks must settle. Of course, I am a disappointed irreverent old grumbler. Of course; and of course, too, young men

must needs buy their own experience, instead of taking old folks' at a gift. There — use your own eyes, and judge for yourself. There you may see what sort of saints are bred by this plan of managing the Catholic church. There comes one of them. Now! I say no more!"

As he spoke, two tall negroes came up to them, and set down before the steps of a large church which they were passing, an object new to Philammon — a sedan-chair, the poles of which were inlaid with ivory and silver, and the upper part enclosed in rose-coloured silk curtains.

"What is inside that cage?" asked he of the old priest, as the negroes stood wiping the perspiration from their foreheads, and a smart slave-girl stepped forward, with a parasol and slippers in her hand, and reverently lifted the lower edge of the curtain.

"A saint, I tell you!"

An embroidered shoe, with a large gold cross on the instep, was put forth delicately from beneath the curtain, and the kneeling maid put on the slipper over it.

"There!" whispered the old grumbler. "Not enough, you see, to use Christian men as beasts of burden — Abbot Isidore used to say — ay, and told Iron, the pleader, to his face, that he could not conceive how a man who loved Christ, and knew the grace which has made all men free, could keep a slave."

"Nor can I," said Philammon.

"But we think otherwise, you see, in Alexandria here. We can't even walk up the steps of God's temple without an additional protection to our delicate feet."

"I had thought it was written, 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground.'"

"Ah! there are a good many more things written which we do not find it convenient to recollect. — Look! There is one of the pillars of the Church — the richest and most pious lady in Alexandria."

And forth stepped a figure, at which Philammon's eyes opened wider than they had done even at the sight of Pelagia. Whatever thoughts the rich and careless grace of her attire might have raised in his mind, it had certainly not given his innate Greek good taste the inclination to laugh and weep at once, which he felt at this specimen of the tasteless fashion of an artificial and decaying civilization. Her gown was stuffed out behind in a fashion which provoked from the dirty boys who lay about the steps, gambling for pistachios on their fingers, the same comments with which St. Clement had upbraided from the pulpit the Alexandrian ladies of his day. The said gown of white silk was bedizened, from waist to ankle, with certain mysterious red and green figures, at least a foot long, which Philammon gradually discovered to be a representation, in the very lowest and ugliest style of fallen art, of Dives and Lazarus; while down her back hung, upon a bright blue shawl, edged with embroidered crosses, Job sitting, potsherd in hand, surrounded by his three friends — a memorial, the old priest whispered, of a pilgrimage which she had taken a year or two before, to Arabia, to see and kiss the identical dunghill on which the patriarch had sat.

Round her neck hung, by one of half-a-dozen necklaces, a manuscript of the Gospels, gilt-edged and

with jewels; the lofty diadem of pearls on her head carried in front a large gold cross; while above and around it her hair, stiffened with pomatum, was frizzled out half a foot from a wilderness of plaits and curls, which must have cost some hapless slave-girl an hour's work, and perhaps more than one scolding, that very morning.

Meekly, with simpering face and downcast eyes, and now and then a penitent sigh and shake of the head and pressure of her hand on her jewelled bosom, the fair penitent was proceeding up the steps, when she caught sight of the priest and the monk, and turning to them, with an obeisance of the deepest humility, entreated to be allowed to kiss the hem of their garments.

"You had far better, madam," said Philammon, bluntly enough, "kiss the hem of your own. You carry two lessons there which you do not seem to have learnt yet."

In an instant her face flushed up into pride and fury. "I asked for your blessing, and not for a sermon. I can have that when I like."

"And such as you like," grumbled the old priest, as she swept up the steps, tossing some small coin to the ragged boys, and murmuring to herself, loud enough for Philammon's hearing, that she should "certainly inform the confessor, and that she would not be insulted in the streets by savage monks."

"Now she will confess her sins inside — all but those which she has been showing off to us here outside, and beat her breast, and weep like a very Magdalen; and then the worthy man will comfort her with — 'What a beautiful chain! And what a shawl —

allow me touch it! How soft and delicate this Indian wool! — Ah! if you knew the debts which I have been compelled to incur in the service of the sanctuary! —' And then of course the answer will be, as, indeed, he expects it should, that if it can be of the least use in the service of the Temple, she, of course, will think it only too great an honour. . . . . And he will keep the chain, and perhaps the shawl, too. And she will go home, believing that she has fulfilled to the very letter the command to break off her sins by almsgiving, and only sorry that the good priest happened to hit on that particular gewgaw!"

"What," asked Philammon; "dare she actually not refuse such importunity?"

"From a poor priest like me, stoutly enough; but from a popular ecclesiastic like him. . . . As Jerome says, in a letter of his I once saw, ladies think twice in such cases before they offend the city newsmonger. Have you anything more to say?"

Philammon had nothing to say; and wisely held his peace, while the old grumbler ran on —

"Ah, boy, you have yet to learn city fashions! When you are a little older, instead of speaking unpleasant truths to a fine lady with a cross on her forehead, you will be ready to run to the pillars of Hercules at her beck and nod, for the sake of her disinterested help toward a fashionable pulpit, or perhaps a bishopric. The ladies settle that for us here."

"The women?"

"The women, lad. Do you suppose that they heap priests and churches with wealth for nothing? They have their reward. Do you suppose that a preacher

gets into the pulpit of that church there, without looking anxiously, at the end of each peculiarly flowery sentence, to see whether her saintship there is clapping or not? She, who has such a delicate sense for orthodoxy, that she can scent out Novatianism or Origenism where no other mortal nose would suspect it. She who meets at her own house weekly all the richest and most pious women of the city, to settle our discipline for us, as the court cooks do our doctrine. She who has even, it is whispered, the ear of the Augusta Pulcheria herself, and sends monthly letters to her at Constantinople, and might give the patriarch himself some trouble, if he crossed her holy will?"

"What! will Cyril truckle to such creatures?"

"Cyril is a wise man in his generation — too wise, some say, for a child of the light. But at least, he knows there is no use fighting with those whom you cannot conquer; and while he can get money out of these great ladies for his almshouses, and orphan-houses, and lodging-houses, and hospitals, and workshops, and all the rest of it — and in that, I will say for him, there is no man on earth equal to him, but Ambrose of Milan and Basil of Cæsarea — why, I don't quarrel with him for making the best of a bad matter; and a very bad matter it is, boy, and has been ever since emperors and courtiers have given up burning and crucifying us, and taken to patronizing and bribing us instead."

Philammon walked on in silence by the old priest's side, stunned and sickened . . . "And this is what I have come out to see — reeds shaken in the wind, and men clothed in soft raiment, fit only for kings' palaces!" For this he had left the dear old Laura, and the simple

joys and friendships of childhood, and cast himself into a roaring whirlpool of labour and temptation! This was the harmonious strength and unity of that Church Catholic, in which, as he had been taught from boyhood, there was but one Lord, one Faith, one Spirit. This was the indivisible body, "without spot or wrinkle, which fitly joined together and compacted by that which every member supplied, according to the effectual and proportionate working of every part, increased the body, and enabled it to build itself up in Love!" He shuddered as the wellknown words passed through his memory, and seemed to mock the base and chaotic reality around him. He felt angry with the old man for having broken his dream, he longed to believe that his complaints were only exaggerations of cynic peevishness, of selfish disappointment: and yet, had not Arsenius warned him? Had he not foretold, word for word, what the youth would find — what he had found? Then was Saint Paul's great idea an empty and an impossible dream? No! God's word could not fail; the church could not err. The fault could not be in her, but in her enemies; not, as the old man said, in her too great prosperity, but in her slavery. And then the words which he had heard from Cyril at their first interview rose before him as the true explanation. How could the Church work freely and healthily while she was crushed and fettered by the rulers of this world? And how could they be anything but the tyrants and antichrists they were while they were menaced and deluded by heathen philosophy, and vain systems of human wisdom? If Orestes was the curse of the Alexandrian Church, then Hypatia was the curse of Orestes. On her head the

true blame lay. She was the root of the evil. Who would extirpate it? . . . .

Why should not he? It might be dangerous: yet, successful or unsuccessful, it must be glorious. The cause of Christianity wanted great examples. Might he not — and his young heart beat high at the thought — might he not, by some great act of daring, self-sacrifice, divine madness of faith, like David's of old, when he went out against the giant — awaken selfish and luxurious souls to a noble emulation, and recall to their minds, perhaps to their lives, the patterns of those martyrs who were the pride, the glory, the heir-loom of Egypt? And as figure after figure rose before his imagination, of simple men and weak women who had conquered temptation and shame, torture and death, to live for ever on the lips of men, and take their seats among the patricians of the heavenly court, with brows glittering through all eternities with the martyr's crown, his heart beat thick and fast, and he longed only for an opportunity to dare and die.

And the longing begot the opportunity. For he had hardly rejoined his brother visitors when the absorbing thought took word again, and he began questioning them eagerly for more information about Hypatia.

On that point, indeed, he obtained nothing but fresh invective; but when his companions, after talking of the triumph which the true faith had gained that morning, went on to speak of the great overthrow of Paganism twenty years before, under the patriarch Theophilus; of Olympiodorus and his mob, who held the Serapeium for many days by force of arms against the Christians, making sallies into the city, and

torturing and murdering the prisoners whom they took; of the martyrs who, among those very pillars which overhung their heads, had died in torments rather than sacrifice to Serapis; and of the final victory, and the soldier who, in presence of the trembling mob, clove the great jaw of the colossal idol, and snapped for ever the spell of heathenism, Philammon's heart burned to distinguish himself like that soldier, and to wipe out his qualms of conscience by some more unquestionable deed of Christian prowess. There were no idols now to break: but there was philosophy — "Why not carry war into the heart of the enemy's camp, and beard Satan in his very den? Why does not some man of God go boldly into the lecture-room of the sorceress, and testify against her to her face?"

"Do it yourself, if you dare," said Peter. "We have no wish to get our brains knocked out by all the profligate young gentlemen in the city."

"I will do it," said Philammon.

"That is if his holiness allows you to make such a fool of yourself."

"Take care, sir, of your words. You revile the blessed martyrs, from St. Stephen to St. Telemachus, when you call such a deed foolishness."

"I shall most certainly inform his holiness of your insolence."

"Do so," said Philammon, who, possessed with a new idea, wished for nothing more. And there the matter dropped for the time.

* * * * *

"The presumption of the young in this generation is growing insufferable," said Peter to his master that evening.

"So much the better. They put their elders on their mettle in the race of good works. But who has been presuming to-day?"

"That mad boy whom Pambo sent up from the deserts, dared to offer himself as champion of the faith against Hypatia. He actually proposed to go into her lecture-room and argue with her to her face. What think you of that for a specimen of youthful modesty, and self-distrust?"

Cyril was silent a while.

"What answer am I to have the honour of taking back? A month's relegation to Nitria on bread and water? You, I am sure, will not allow such things to go unpunished; indeed, if they do, there is an end to all authority and discipline."

Cyril was still silent; whilst Peter's brow clouded fast. At last he answered —

"The cause wants martyrs. Send the boy to me."

Peter went down, with a shrug and an expression of face which looked but too like envy, and ushered up the trembling youth, who dropped on his knees as soon as he entered.

"So you wish to go into the heathen woman's lecture-room and defy her? Have you courage for it?"

"God will give it me."

"You will be murdered by her pupils."

"I can defend myself," said Philammon, with a pardonable glance downward at his sinewy limbs. "And if not: what death more glorious than martyrdom?"

Cyril smiled genially enough. "Promise me two things."

"Two thousand, if you will."

"Two are quite difficult enough to keep. Youth is rash in promises, and rasher in forgetting them. Promise me that, whatever happens, you will not strike the first blow."

"I do."

"Promise me, again, that you will not argue with her."

"What then?"

"Contradict, denounce, defy. But give no reasons. If you do, you are lost. She is subtler than the serpent, skilled in all the tricks of logic, and you will become a laughing-stock, and run away in shame. Promise me."

"I do."

"Then go."

"When?"

"The sooner the better. At what hour does the accursed woman lecture to-morrow, Peter?"

"We saw her going to the Museum at nine this morning."

"Then go at nine to-morrow. There is money for you."

"What is this for?" asked Philammon, fingering curiously the first coins which he ever had handled in his life.

"To pay for your entrance. To the philosopher none enters without money. Not so to the Church of God, open all day long to the beggar and the slave. If you convert her, well. And if not." . . . . And he added to himself between his teeth, "And if not, well also — perhaps better."

"Ay!" said Peter, bitterly, as he ushered Philammon out. "Go up to Ramoth Gilead, and prosper,

young fool! What evil spirit sent you here to feed the noble patriarch's only weakness?"

"What do you mean?" asked Philammon, as fiercely as he dare.

"The fancy that preachings, and protestations, and martyrdoms can drive out the Canaanites, who can only be got rid of with the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. His uncle Theophilus knew that well enough. If he had not, Olympiodorus might have been master of Alexandria, and incense burning before Serapis to this day. Ay, go, and let her convert you! Touch the accursed thing, like Achan, and see if you do not end by having it in your tent. Keep company with the daughters of Midian, and see if you do not join yourself to Baalpeor, and eat the offerings of the dead!"

And with this encouraging sentence, the two parted for the night.

CHAPTER VIII.

The east wind.

As Hypatia went forth the next morning, in all her glory, with a crowd of philosophers and philosophasters, students, and fine gentlemen, following her in reverend admiration across the street to her lecture-room, a ragged beggar-man, accompanied by a huge and villanous-looking dog, planted himself right before her, and extending a dirty hand, whined for an alms.

Hypatia, whose refined taste could never endure the sight, much less the contact, of anything squalid and degraded, recoiled a little, and bade the attendant slave get rid of the man, with a coin. Several of the younger gentlemen, however, considered themselves adepts in that noble art of "upsetting" then in vogue in the African universities, to which we all have reason enough to be thankful, seeing that it drove Saint Augustine from Carthage to Rome; and they, in compliance with the usual fashion of tormenting any simple creature who came in their way by mystification and insult, commenced a series of personal witticisms, which the beggar bore stoically enough. The coin was offered him, but he blandly put aside the hand of the giver and keeping his place on the pavement, seemed inclined to dispute Hypatia's further passage.

"What do you want? Send the wretch and his frightful dog away, gentlemen!" said the poor philosopher, in some trepidation.

"I know that dog," said one of them; "it is Aben-Ezra's. Where did you find it before it was lost, you rascal?"

"Where your mother found you when she palmed you off upon her goodman, my child — in the slave-market. Fair sibyl, have you already forgotten your humblest pupil, as these young dogs have, who are already trying to upset their master and instructor in the angelic science of bullying?"

And the beggar, lifting his broad straw hat, disclosed the features of Raphael Aben-Ezra. Hypatia recoiled with a shriek of surprise.

"Ah! you are astonished. At what, I pray?"

"To see you, sir, thus!"

"Why, then? You have been preaching to us all a long time the glory of abstraction from the allurements of sense. It augurs ill, surely, for your estimate either of your pupils, or of your own eloquence, if you are so struck with consternation because one of them has actually at last obeyed you."

"What is the meaning of this masquerade, most excellent sir?" asked Hypatia and a dozen voices beside.

"Ask Cyril. I am on my way to Italy, in the character of the New Diogenes, to look, like him, for a man. When I have found one, I shall feel great pleasure in returning to acquaint you with the amazing news. Farewell! I wished to look once more at a certain countenance, though I have turned, as you see, Cynic; and intend henceforth to attend no teacher but

my dog, who will luckily charge no fees for instruction; if she did, I must go untaught; for my ancestral wealth made itself wings yesterday morning. You are aware, doubtless, of the Plebiscitum against the Jews, which was carried into effect under the auspices of a certain holy tribune of the people?"

"Infamous!"

"And dangerous, my dear lady. Success is inspiriting. . . . . and Theon's house is quite as easily sacked as the Jews' quarter. . . . . Beware."

"Come, come, Aben-Ezra," cried the young men; "you are far too good company for us to lose you for that rascally patriarch's fancy. We will make a subscription for you, eh? And you shall live with each of us, month and month about. We shall quite lose the trick of joking without you."

"Thank you, gentlemen. But really you have been my butts far too long for me to think of becoming yours. Madam, one word in private before I go."

Hypatia leant forward, and speaking in Syriac, whispered hurriedly, —

"Oh, stay, sir, I beseech you! You are the wisest of my pupils — perhaps my only true pupil. . . . . My father will find some concealment for you from these wretches; and if you need money, remember, he is your debtor. We have never repaid you the gold which —"

"Fairest Muse, that was but my entrance-fee to Parnassus. It is I who am in your debt; and I have brought my arrears, in the form of this opal ring. As for shelter near you," he went on, lowering his voice, and speaking like her, in Syriac — "Hypatia the Gentile is far too lovely for the peace of mind of Ra-

phael the Jew." And he drew from his finger Miriam's ring, and offered it.

"Impossible!" said Hypatia, blushing scarlet: "I cannot accept it."

"I beseech you. It is the last earthly burden I have, except this snail's prison of flesh and blood. My dagger will open a crack through that when it becomes intolerable. But as I do not intend to leave my shell, if I can help it, except just when and how I choose; and as, if I take this ring with me, some of Heraclian's Circumcellions will assuredly knock my brains out for the sake of it — I must entreat."

"Never! Can you not sell the ring, and escape to Synesius? He will give you shelter."

"The hospitable hurricane! Shelter, yes; but rest, none. As soon pitch my tent in the crater of Ætna. Why, he will be trying day and night to convert me to that eclectic farrago of his, which he calls philosophic Christianity. Well, if you will not have the ring, it is soon disposed of. We Easterns know how to be magnificent, and vanish as the lords of the world ought."

And he turned to the philosophic crowd.

"Here, gentlemen of Alexandria! Does any gay youth wish to pay his debts once and for all? — Behold the Rainbow of Solomon, an opal such as Alexandria never saw before, which would buy any one of you, and his Macedonian papa, and Macedonian mamma, and his Macedonian sisters, and horses, and parrots, and peacocks, twice over, in any slave-market in the world. Any gentleman who wishes to possess a jewel worth ten thousand gold pieces, will only need to pick it out of the gutter into which I throw it. Scramble for it,

you young Phædrias and Pamphili! There are Laides and Thaides enough about, who will help you to spend it."

And raising the jewel on high, he was in the act of tossing it into the street, when his arm was seized from behind, and the ring snatched from his hand. He turned, fiercely enough, and saw behind him, her eyes flashing fury and contempt, old Miriam.

Bran sprung at the old woman's throat in an instant: but recoiled again before the glare of her eye. Raphael called the dog off, and turning quietly to the disappointed spectators —

"It is all right, my luckless friends. You must raise money for yourselves, after all; which, since the departure of my nation, will be a somewhat more difficult matter than ever. The overruling destinies, whom, as you all know so well when you are getting tipsy, not even philosophers can resist, have restored the Rainbow of Solomon to its original possessor. Farewell, Queen of Philosophy! When I find the man, you shall hear of it. Mother, I am coming with you for a friendly word before we part, though," he went on laughing as the two walked away together, "it was a scurvy trick of you to balk one of The Nation of the exquisite pleasure of seeing those heathen dogs scrambling in the gutter for his bounty."

Hypatia went on to the museum, utterly bewildered by this strange meeting, and its still stranger end. She took care, nevertheless, to betray no sign of her deep interest till she found herself alone in her little waiting-room adjoining the lecture-hall; and there throwing herself into a chair, she sat and thought, till she found, to her surprise and anger, the tears trickling down her

cheeks. Not that her bosom held one spark of affection for Raphael. If there had ever been any danger of that, the wily Jew had himself taken care to ward it off, by the sneering and frivolous tone with which he quashed every approach to deep feeling, either in himself or in others. As for his compliments to her beauty, she was far too much accustomed to such, to be either pleased or displeased by them. But she felt, as she said, that she had lost perhaps her only true pupil; and more — perhaps her only true master. For she saw clearly enough, that under that Silenus' mask was hidden a nature capable of — perhaps more than she dare think of. She had always felt him her superior in practical cunning; and that morning had proved to her what she had long suspected, that he was possibly also her superior in that moral earnestness and strength of will for which she looked in vain among the enervated Greeks who surrounded her. And even in those matters in which he professed himself her pupil, she had long been alternately delighted by finding that he alone, of all her school, seemed thoroughly and instinctively to comprehend her every word, and chilled by the disagreeable suspicion that he was only playing with her, and her mathematics and geometry, and metaphysic and dialectic, like a fencer practising with foils, while he reserved his real strength for some object more worthy of him. More than once some paradox or question of his had shaken her neatest systems into a thousand cracks and opened up ugly depths of doubt, even on the most seemingly-palpable certainties; or some half-jesting allusion to those Hebrew Scriptures, the quantity and quality of his faith in which he would never confess, made her indignant at the notion that he

considered himself in possession of a reserved ground of knowledge, deeper and surer than her own, in which he did not deign to allow her to share.

And yet she was irresistibly attracted to him. That deliberate and consistent luxury of his, from which she shrank, he had always boasted that he was able to put on and take off at will like a garment; and now he seemed to have proved his words; to be a worthy rival of the great stoics of old time. Could Zeno himself have asked more from frail humanity? Moreover, Raphael had been of infinite practical use to her. He worked out, unasked, her mathematical problems; he looked out authorities, kept her pupils in order by his bitter tongue, and drew fresh students to her lectures by the attractions of his wit, his arguments, and last, but not least, his unrivalled cook and cellar. Above all, he acted the part of a fierce and valiant watch-dog on her behalf, against the knots of clownish and often brutal sophists, the wrecks of the old Cynic, Stoic, and academic schools, who, with venom increasing, after the wont of parties, with their decrepitude, assailed the beautifully-bespangled card-castle of Neo-Platonism, as an empty medley of all Greek philosophies with all eastern superstitions. All such Philistines had as yet dreaded the pen and tongue of Raphael, even more than those of the chivalrous Bishop of Cyrene, though he certainly, to judge from certain of his letters, hated them as much as he could hate any human being; which was after all not very bitterly.

But the visits of Synesius were few and far between; the distance between Carthage and Alexandria, and the labour of his diocese, and worse than all, the growing difference in purpose between him and his beautiful

teacher, made his protection all but valueless. And now Aben-Ezra was gone too, and with him were gone a thousand plans and hopes. To have converted him at last to a philosophic faith in the old gods! To have made him her instrument for turning back the stream of human error! .... How often had that dream crossed her! And now, who would take his place? Athanasius? Synesius in his goodnature might dignify him with the name of brother, but to her he was a powerless pedant, destined to die without having wrought any deliverance on the earth, as indeed the event proved. Plutarch of Athens? He was superannuated. Syrianus? A mere logician, twisting Aristotle to mean what she knew, and he ought to have known, Aristotle never meant. Her father? A man of triangles and conic sections. How paltry they all looked by the side of the unfathomable Jew! — Spinners of charming cobwebs .... But would the flies condescend to be caught in them! Builders of pretty houses .... If people would but enter and live in them! Preachers of superfine morality .... which their admiring pupils never dreamt of practising. Without her, she well knew, philosophy must die in Alexandria. And was it her wisdom — or other and more earthly charms of hers — which enabled her to keep it alive? Sickening thought! Oh, that she were ugly, only to test the power of her doctrines! ...

Ho! The odds were fearful enough already: she would be glad of any help, however earthly and carnal. But was not the work hopeless? What she wanted was men who could act while she thought. And those were just the men whom she would find nowhere, but — she knew it too well — in the hated

Christian priesthood. And then that fearful Iphigenia sacrifice loomed in the distance as inevitable. The only hope of philosophy was in her despair!

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She dashed away the tears, and proudly entered the lecture-hall, and ascended the tribune like a goddess, amid the shouts of her audience .... What did she care for them? Would they do what she told them? She was half through her lecture before she could recollect herself, and banish from her mind the thought of Raphael. And at that point we will take the lecture up.

* * * * *

"Truth! Where is truth, but in the soul itself? Facts, objects, are but phantoms matter-woven — ghosts of this earthly night, at which the soul, sleeping here in the mire and clay of matter, shudders and names its own vague tremors sense and perception. Yet, even as our nightly dreams stir in us the suspicion of mysterious and immaterial presences, unfettered by the bonds of time and space, so do these waking dreams which we call sight and sound. They are divine messengers, whom Zeus, pitying his children, even when he pent them in this prison-house of flesh, appointed to arouse in them dim recollections of that real world of souls whence they came. Awakened once to them; seeing through the veil of sense and fact, the spiritual truth of which they are but the accidental garment, concealing the very thing which they make palpable, the philosopher may neglect the fact for the doctrine, the shell for the kernel, the body for the soul, of which it is but the symbol and the vehicle. What matter, then, to the philosopher whether these

names of men, Hector or Priam, Helen or Achilles, were ever visible as phantoms of flesh and blood before the eyes of men? What matter whether they spoke or thought as he of Scios says they did? What matter, even, whether he himself ever had earthly life? The book is here — the word which men call his. Let the thoughts thereof have been at first whose they may, now they are mine. I have taken them to myself, and thought them to myself, and made them parts of my own soul. Nay, they were and ever will be parts of me; for they, even as the poet was, even as I am, are but a part of the universal soul. What matter, then, what myths grew up around those mighty thoughts of ancient seers? Let others try to reconcile the Cyclic fragments, or vindicate the Catalogue of ships. What has the philosopher lost, though the former were proved to be contradictory, and the latter interpolated? The thoughts are there, and ours. Let us open our hearts lovingly to receive them, from whence soever they may have come. As in men, so in books, the soul is all with which our souls must deal; and the soul of the book is whatsoever beautiful, and true, and noble, we can find in it. It matters not to us whether the poet was altogether conscious of the meanings which we can find in him. Consciously or unconsciously to him, the meanings must be there; for were they not there to be seen, how could we see them? There are those among the uninitiate vulgar — and those, too, who carry under the philosophic cloak hearts still uninitiate — who revile such interpretations as merely the sophistic and arbitrary sports of fancy. It lies with them to show what Homer meant, if our spiritual meanings be absurd; to tell the world why Homer is

admirable, if that for which we hold him up to admiration does not exist in him. Will they say that the honour which he has enjoyed for ages was inspired by that which seems to be his first and literal meaning? And more, will they venture to impute that literal meaning to him? Can they suppose that the divine soul of Homer could degrade itself to write of actual and physical feastings, and nuptials, and dances, actual nightly thefts of horses, actual fidelity of dogs and swineherds, actual intermarriages between deities and men, or that it is this seeming vulgarity which has won for him from the wisest of every age the title of the father of poetry? Degrading thought! fit only for the coarse and sense-bound tribe who can appreciate nothing but what is palpable to sense and sight! As soon believe the Christian scriptures, when they tell us of a deity who has hands and feet, eyes and ears, who condescends to command the patterns of furniture and culinary utensils, and is made perfect by being born — disgusting thought! — as the son of a village maiden, and defiling himself with the wants and sorrows of the lowest slaves!"

"It is false! blasphemous! The Scriptures cannot lie!" cried a voice from the further end of the room.

It was Philammon's. He had been listening to the whole lecture, and yet not so much listening as watching, in bewilderment, the beauty of the speaker, the grace of her action, the melody of her voice, and last but not least, the maze of her rhetoric, as it glittered before his mind's eye, like a cobweb diamonded with dew. A sea of new thoughts and questions, if not of doubts, came rushing in at every sentence on his acute Greek intellect, all the more plentifully and irresistibly

because his speculative faculty was as yet altogether waste and empty, undefended by any scientific culture from the inrushing flood. For the first time in his life he found himself face to face with the root questions of all thought — "What am I, and where?" "What can I know?" And in the half-terrified struggle with them, he had all but forgotten the purpose for which he entered the lecture-hall. He felt that he must break the spell. Was she not a heathen and a false prophetess? Here was something tangible to attack; and half in indignation at the blasphemy, half in order to force himself into action, he had sprung up and spoken.

A yell arose. "Turn the monk out!" "Throw the rustic through the window!" cried a dozen young gentlemen. Several of the most valiant began to scramble over the benches up to him; and Philammon was congratulating himself on the near approach of a glorious martyrdom, when Hypatia's voice, calm and silvery, stifled the tumult in a moment.

"Let the youth listen, gentlemen. He is but a monk and a plebeian, and knows no better; he has been taught thus. Let him sit here quietly, and perhaps we may be able to teach him otherwise."

And without interrupting, even by a change of tone, the thread of her discourse, she continued —

"Listen, then, to a passage, from the sixth book of the 'Iliad,' in which last night I seemed to see glimpses of some mighty mystery. You know it well: yet I will read it to you; the very sound and pomp of that great verse may tune our souls to a fit key for the reception of lofty wisdom. For well said Abamnon the Teacher,

that 'the soul consisted first of harmony and rhythm, and ere it gave itself to the body, had listened to the divine harmony. Therefore it is that when, after having come into a body, it hears such melodies as most preserve the divine footstep of harmony, it embraces such, and recollects from them that divine harmony, and is impelled to it, and finds its home in it, and shares of it as much as it can share.'"

And therewith fell on Philammon's ear, for the first time, the mighty thunder-roll of Homer's verse: —

So spoke the stewardess: but Hector rushed
From the house, the same way back, down stately streets,
Through the broad city, to the Scaian gates,
Whereby he must go forth toward the plain,
There running toward him came Andromache,
His ample-dowered wife, Eetion's child —
Eetion the great-hearted, he who dwelt
In Thebé under Placos, and the woods
Of Placos, ruling over Kilic men.
His daughter wedded Hector brazen-helmed,
And met him then; and with her came a maid,
Who bore in arms a playful-hearted babe,
An infant still, akin to some fair star,
Only and well-loved child of Hector's house,
Whom he had named Scamandrios, but the rest
Astyanax, because his sire alone
Upheld the weal of Ilion the holy.
He smiled in silence, looking on his child:
But she stood close to him, with many tears;
And hung upon his hand, and spoke, and called him.
"My hero, thy great heart will wear thee out;
Thou pitiest not thine infant child, nor me
The hapless, soon to be thy widow;
The Greeks will slay thee, falling one and all
Upon thee: but to me were sweeter far,
Having lost thee, to die; no cheer to me
Will come thenceforth, if thou shouldst meet thy fate;
Woes only: mother have I none, nor sire.
For that my sire divine Achilles slew,
And wasted utterly the pleasant homes
Of Kilic folk in Thebé lofty-walled,

And slew Eetion with the sword; yet spared
To strip the dead: awe kept his soul from that.
Therefore he burnt him in his graven arms,
And heaped a mound above him; and around
The damsels of the Ægis-holding Zeus,
The nymphs who haunt the upland, planted elms.
And seven brothers bred with me in the halls,
All in one day went down to Hades there;
For all of them swift-foot Achilles slew
Beside the lazy kine and snow-white sheep.
And her, my mother, who of late was queen
Beneath the woods of Placos, he brought here
Among his other spoils; yet set her free
Again, receiving ransom rich and great.
But Artemis, whose bow is all her joy,
Smote her to death within her father's halls.
Hector! so thou art father to me now,
Mother, and brother, and husband fair and strong!
Oh, come now, pity me, and stay thou here
Upon the tower, nor make thy child an orphan
And me thy wife a widow; range the men
Here by the fig-tree, where the city lies
Lowest, and where the wall can well be scaled;
For here three times the best have tried the assault
Round either Ajax, and Idomeneus,
And round the Atridai both, and Tydeus' son,
Whether some cunning seer taught them craft,
Or their own spirit stirred and drove them on."
Then spake tall Hector, with the glancing helm:
"All this I too have watched, my wife; yet much
I hold in dread the scorn of Trojan men
And Trojan women with their trailing shawls,
If, like a coward, I should skulk from war.
Beside, I have no lust to stay; I have learnt
Aye to be bold, and lead the van of fight,
To win my father, and myself, a name.
For well I know, at heart and in my thought,
The day will come when Ilios the holy
Shall lie in heaps, and Priam, and the folk
Of ashen-speared Priam, perish all.
But yet no woe to come to Trojan men,
Nor even to Hecabe, nor Priam king,
Nor to my brothers, who shall roll in dust,
Many and fair, beneath the strokes of foes,
So moves me, as doth thine, when thou shalt go
Weeping, led off by some brass-harnessed Greek,
Robbed of the daylight of thy liberty,

To weave in Argos at another's loom,
Or bear the water of Messeis home,
Or Hypereia, with unseemly toils,
While heavy doom constrains thee, and perchance
The folk may say, who see thy tears run down,
'This was the wife of Hector, best in fight
At Ilium, of horse-taming Trojan men.'
So will they say perchance; while unto thee
Now grief will come, for such a husband's loss,
Who might have warded off the day of thrall.
But may the soil be heaped above my corpse
Before I hear thy shriek and see thy shame!"
He spoke, and stretched his arms to take the child:
But back the child upon his nurse's breast
Shrank crying, frightened at his father's looks,
Fearing the brass and crest of horse's hair
Which waved above the helmet terribly.
Then out that father dear and mother laughed,
And glorious Hector took the helmet off,
And laid it gleaming on the ground, and kiss'd
His darling child, and danced him in his arms;
And spoke in prayer to Zeus, and all the gods:
"Zeu, and ye other gods, oh grant that this
My child, like me, may grow the champion here
As good in strength, and rule with might in Troy.
That men may say, 'The boy is better far
Than was his sire,' when he returns from war,
Bearing a gory harness, having slain
A foeman, and his mother's heart rejoice."
Thus saying, on the hands of his dear wife
He laid the child; and she received him back
In fragrant bosom, smiling through her tears. *

"Such is the myth. Do you fancy that in it Homer meant to hand down to the admiration of ages such

* The above lines are not meant as a "translation," but as an humble attempt to give the literal sense in some sort of metre. It would be an act of arrogance even to aim at success where Pope and Chapman failed. It is simply, I believe, impossible to render Homer into English verse; because, for one reason among many, it is impossible to preserve the pomp of sound, which invests with grandeur his most common words. How can any skill represent the rhythm of Homeric Greek in a language which — to take the first verse which comes to hand — transforms "boos megaloio boeiên," into "great ox's hide?".

earthly commonplaces as a mother's brute affection, and the terrors of an infant? Surely the deeper insight of the philosopher may be allowed, without the reproach of fancifulness, to see in it the adumbration of some deeper mystery.

"The elect soul, for instance — is not its name Astyanax, king of the city; by the fact of its ethereal parentage, the leader and lord of all around it, though it knows it not? A child as yet, it lies upon the fragrant bosom of its mother Nature, the nurse and yet the enemy of man — Andromache, as the poet well names her, because she fights with that being, when grown to man's estate, whom as a child she nourished. Fair is she, yet unwise; pampering us, after the fashion of mothers, with weak indulgences; fearing to send us forth into the great realities of speculation, there to forget her in the pursuit of glory, she would have us while away our prime within the harem, and play for ever round her knees. And has not the elect soul a father, too, whom it knows not? Hector, he who is without — unconfined, unconditioned by Nature, yet its husband? — the allpervading plastic Soul, informing, organizing, whom men call Zeus the lawgiver, Æther the fire, Osiris the lifegiver; whom here the poet has set forth as the defender of the mystic city, the defender of harmony, and order, and beauty throughout the universe? Apart sits his great father — Priam, the first of existences, father of many sons, the Absolute Reason; unseen, tremendous, immovable, in distant glory; yet himself amenable to that abysmal unity which Homer calls Fate, the source of all which is, yet in Itself Nothing, without predicate, unnameable.

"From It and for It the universal Soul thrills through the whole creation, doing the behests of that Reason from which it overflowed, unwillingly, into the storm and crowd of material appearances; warring with the brute forces of gross matter, crushing all which is foul and dissonant to itself, and clasping to its bosom the beautiful, and all wherein it discovers its own reflex; impressing on it its signature, reproducing from it its own likeness, whether star, or dæmon or soul of the elect: — and yet, as the poet hints in anthropomorphic language, haunted all the while by a sadness — weighed down amid all its labours by the sense of a fate — by the thought of that First One from whom the Soul is originally descended; from whom it, and its Father the Reason before it, parted themselves when they dared to think and act, and assert their own freewill.

"And in the mean while, alas! Hector, the father, fights around, while his children sleep and feed; and he is away in the wars, and they know him not — know not that they the individuals are but parts of him the universal. And yet at moments — oh! thrice blessed they whose celestial parentage has made such moments part of their appointed destiny — at moments flashes on the human child the intuition of the unutterable secret. In the spangled glory of summer night — in the roar of the Nile-flood, sweeping down fertility in every wave — in the awful depths of the temple shrine — in the wild melodies of old Orphic singers, or before the images of those gods of whose perfect beauty the divine theosophists of Greece caught a fleeting shadow, and with the sudden might of artistic ecstasy smote it, as by an enchanter's wand, into an

eternal sleep of snowy stone — in these there flashes on the inner eye a vision beautiful and terrible, of a force, an energy, a soul, an idea, one and yet million-fold, rushing through all created things, like the wind across a lyre, thrilling the strings into celestial harmony — one life-blood through the million veins of the universe, from one great unseen heart, whose thunderous pulses the mind hears far away, beating for ever in the abysmal solitude, beyond the heavens and the galaxies, beyond the spaces and the times, themselves but veins and runnels from its all-teeming sea.

"Happy, thrice happy they who once have dared, even though breathless, blinded with tears of awful joy, struck down upon their knees in utter helplessness, as they feel themselves but dead leaves in the wind which sweeps the universe — happy they who have dared to gaze, if but for an instant, on the terror of that glorious pageant; who have not, like the young Astyanax, clung shrieking to the breast of mother Nature, scared by the heaven-wide flash of Hector's arms, and the glitter of his rainbow-crest! Happy, thrice happy! even though their eyeballs, blasted by excess of light, wither to ashes in their sockets! — Were it not a noble end to have seen Zeus, and die like Semele, burnt up by his glory? Happy, thrice happy! though their mind reel from the divine intoxication, and the hogs of Circe call them henceforth madmen and enthusiasts. Enthusiasts they are; for Deity is in them, and they in It. For the time, this burden of individuality vanishes, and recognising themselves as portions of the universal Soul, they rise upward, through and beyond that Reason from whence

the soul proceeds, to the fount of all — the ineffable and Supreme One — and seeing It, become by that act, portions of Its essence. They speak no more, but It speaks in them, and their whole being, transmuted by that glorious sunlight into whose rays they have dared, like the eagle, to gaze without shrinking, becomes an harmonious vehicle for the words of Deity, and passive itself, utters the secrets of the immortal gods. What wonder if to the brute mass they seem as dreamers? Be it so. . . . . Smile if you will. But ask me not to teach you things unspeakable, above all sciences, which the word-battle of dialectic, the discursive struggles of reason can never reach, but which must be seen only, and when seen confessed to be unspeakable. Hence, thou disputer of the Academy! — hence, thou sneering Cynic! — hence, thou sense-worshipping Stoic, who fanciest that the soul is to derive her knowledge from those material appearances which she herself creates! . . . . hence —; and yet, no; stay and sneer, if you will. It is but a little time — a few days longer in this prison-house of our degradation, and each thing shall return to its own fountain; the blood-drop to the abysmal heart, and the water to the river, and the river to the shining sea; and the dew-drop which fell from heaven shall rise to heaven again, shaking off the dust-grains which weighed it down, thawed from the earth-frost which chained it here to herb and sward, upward and upward ever through stars and suns, through gods, and through the parents of the gods, purer and purer through successive lives, till it enters The Nothing, which is The All, and find its home at last." . . . .

And the speaker stopped suddenly, her eyes glis-

tening with tears, her whole figure trembling and dilating with rapture. She remained for a moment motionless, gazing earnestly at her audience, as if in hopes of exciting in them some kindred glow; and then recovering herself, added in a more tender tone, not quite unmixed with sadness —

"Go now, my pupils. Hypatia has no more for you to-day. Go now, and spare her at least — woman as she is after all — the shame of finding that she has given you too much, and lifted the veil of Isis before eyes which are not enough purified to behold the glory of the goddess. — Farewell!"

She ended: and Philammon, the moment that the spell of her voice was taken off him, sprung up, and hurried out through the corridor into the street. . . . .

So beautiful! So calm and merciful to him! So enthusiastic towards all which was noble! Had not she, too, spoken of the unseen world, of the hope of immortality, of the conquest of the spirit over the flesh, just as a Christian might have done? Was the gulf between them so infinite? If so, why had her aspirations awakened echoes in his own heart — echoes, too, just such as the prayers and lessons of the Laura used to awaken? If the fruit was so like, must not the root be like also? . . . Could that be a counterfeit? That a minister of Satan in the robes of an angel of light? Light, at least, it was — purity, simplicity, courage, earnestness, tenderness, flashed out from eye, lip, gesture. . . . . A heathen, who disbelieved? . . . . What was the meaning of it all?

But the finishing stroke yet remained which was to complete the utter confusion of his mind. For before he had gone fifty yards up the street, his little

friend of the fruit-basket, whom he had not seen since he vanished under the feet of the mob, in the gateway of the theatre, clutched him by the arm and burst forth, breathless with running, —

"The — gods — heap their favours — on those who — who least deserve them! Rash and insolent rustic! And this is the reward of thy madness!"

"Off with you!" said Philammon, who had no mind at the moment to renew his acquaintance with the little porter. But the guardian of parasols kept a firm hold on his sheepskin.

"Fool! Hypatia herself commands! Yes, you will see her, have speech with her! while I — I, the illuminated — I the appreciating — I the obedient — I the adoring — who for these three years past have grovelled in the kennel, that the hem of her garment might touch the tip of my little finger — I — I — I —"

"What do you want, madman?"

"She calls for thee, insensate wretch! Theon sent me — breathless at once with running and with envy — Go! favourite of the unjust gods!"

"Who is Theon?"

"Her father, ignorant! He commands thee to be at her house — here — opposite — to-morrow at the third hour. Hear and obey! There! they are coming out of the Museum, and all the parasols will get wrong! Oh miserable me!"

And the poor little fellow rushed back again, while Philammon, at his wits' end between dread and longing, started off, and ran the whole way home to the Serapeium, regardless of carriages, elephants, and foot-passengers; and having been knocked down by a surly

porter, and left a piece of his sheepskin between the teeth of a spiteful camel — neither of which insults he had time to resent — arrived at the archbishop's house, found Peter the Reader, and tremblingly begged an audience from Cyril.

CHAPTER IX.

The Snapping of the Bow.

Cyril heard Philammon's story and Hypatia's message with a quiet smile, and then dismissed the youth to an afternoon of labour in the city, commanding him to mention no word of what had happened, and to come to him that evening and receive his order, when he should have had time to think over the matter. So forth Philammon went with his companions, through lanes and alleys hideous with filth and poverty, compulsory idleness and native sin. Fearfully real and practical it all was; but he saw it all dimly, as in a dream. Before his eyes one face was shining; in his ears one silvery voice was ringing. . . . . "He is a monk, and knows no better" . . . . True! And how should he know better? How could he tell how much more there was to know, in that great new universe, in such a cranny whereof his life had till now been past? He had heard but one side already. What if there were two sides? Had he not a right — that is, was it not proper, fair, prudent, that he should hear both, and then judge?

Cyril had hardly, perhaps, done wisely for the youth in sending him out about the practical drudgery of benevolence, before deciding for him what was his duty with regard to Hypatia's invitation. He had not

calculated on the new thoughts which were tormenting the young monk; perhaps they would have been unintelligible to him, had he known of them. Cyril had been bred up under the most stern dogmatic training, in those vast monastic establishments, which had arisen amid the neighbouring saltpetre quarries of Nitria, where thousands toiled in voluntary poverty and starvation at vast bakeries, dyeries, brick-fields, tailors' shops, carpenters' yards; and expended the profits of their labour, not on themselves, for they had need of nothing, but on churches, hospitals, and alms. Educated in that world of practical industrial production as well as of religious exercise, which by its proximity to the great city accustomed monks to that world which they despised; entangled from boyhood in the intrigues of his fierce and ambitious uncle Theophilus, Cyril had succeeded him in the patriarchate of Alexandria without having felt a doubt, and stood free to throw his fiery energy and clear practical intellect into the cause of the Church, without scruple, even, where necessary, without pity. How could such a man sympathize with the poor boy of twenty, suddenly dragged forth from the quiet cavern-shadow of the Laura into the full blaze and roar of the world's noonday? He, too, was cloister-bred. But the busy and fanatic atmosphere of Nitria, where every nerve of soul and body was kept on a life-long artificial strain, without rest, without simplicity, without human affection, was utterly antipodal to the government of the remote and needy, though no less industrious commonwealths of Cœnobites, who dotted the lonely mountain-glens, far up into the heart of the Nubian desert. In such a one Philammon had received, from a vene-

rable man, a mother's sympathy as well as a father's care; and now he yearned for the encouragement of a gentle voice, for the greeting of a kindly eye, and was lonely and sick at heart. . . . . And still Hypatia's voice haunted his ears, like a strain of music, and would not die away. That lofty enthusiasm, so sweet and modest in its grandeur, — that tone of pity — in one so lovely it could not be called contempt — for the many; that delicious phantom of being an elect spirit . . . . unlike the crowd. . . . . "And am I altogether like the crowd?" said Philammon to himself, as he staggered along under the weight of a groaning fever-patient. "Can there be found no fitter work for me than this, which any porter from the quay might do as well? Am I not somewhat wasted on such toil as this? Have I not an intellect, a taste, a reason? I could appreciate what she said. — Why should not my faculties be educated? Why am I only to be shut out from knowledge? There is a Christian Gnosis as well as a heathen one. What was permissible to Clement" — he had nearly said to Origen, but checked himself on the edge of heresy — "is surely lawful for me. Is not my very craving for knowledge a sign that I am capable of it? Surely my sphere is the study rather than the street!"

And then his fellow-labourers — he could not deny it to himself — began to grow less venerable in his eyes. Let him try as he might to forget the old priest's grumblings and detractions, the fact was before him. The men were coarse, fierce, noisy . . . . so different from her! Their talk seemed mere gossip — scandalous too, and hard-judging, most of it; about that man's private ambition, and that woman's proud

looks; and who had stayed for the Eucharist the Sunday before, and who had gone out after the sermon; and how the majority who did not stay could possibly dare to go, and how the minority who did not go could possibly dare to stay. . . . . Endless suspicions, sneers, complaints . . . . what did they care for the eternal glories and the beatific vision? Their one test for all men and things, from the patriarch to the prefect, seemed to be — did he or it advance the cause of the Church — which Philammon soon discovered to mean their own cause, their influence, their self-glorification. And the poor boy, as his faculty for fault-finding quickened under the influence of theirs, seemed to see under the humble stock-phrases in which they talked of their labours of love, and the future reward of their present humiliations, a deep and hardly-hidden pride, a faith in their own infallibility, a contemptuous impatience of every man, however venerable, who differed from their party on any, the slightest, matter. They spoke with sneers of Augustine's Latinizing tendencies, and with open execrations of Chrysostom, as the vilest and most impious of schismatics; and for aught Philammon knew, they were right enough. But when they talked of wars and desolation past and impending, without a word of pity for the slain and ruined, as a just judgment of Heaven upon heretics and heathens; when they argued over the awful struggle for power which, as he gathered from their words, was even then pending between the Emperor and the count of Africa, as if it contained but one question of interest to them — would Cyril, and they as his body-guard, gain or lose power in Alexandria? and lastly, when at some mention of Orestes, and of

Hypatia as his counsellor, they broke out into open imprecations of God's curse, and comforted themselves with the prospect of everlasting torment for both; he shuddered and asked himself involuntarily — were these the ministers of a Gospel? were these the fruits of Christ's Spirit? . . . . And a whisper thrilled through the inmost depth of his soul — "Is there a Gospel? Is there a Spirit of Christ? Would not their fruits be different from these?"

Faint, and low, and distant, was that whisper; like the mutter of an earthquake miles below the soil. And yet, like the earthquake-roll, it had in that one moment jarred every belief, and hope, and memory of his being each a hair's-breadth from its place. . . . Only one hair's-breadth. But that was enough; his whole inward and outward world changed shape, and cracked at every joint. What if it were to fall in pieces? His brain reeled with the thought. He doubted his own identity. The very light of heaven had altered its hue. Was the firm ground on which he stood after all no solid reality, but a fragile shell which covered — what?

The nightmare vanished, and he breathed once more. What a strange dream! The sun and the exertion must have made him giddy. He would forget all about it.

Weary with labour, and still wearier with thought, he returned that evening, longing, and yet dreading, to be permitted to speak with Hypatia. He half hoped at moments that Cyril might think him too weak for it; and the next, all his pride and daring, not to say his faith and hope, spurred him on. Might he but face the terrible enchantress, and rebuke her to her face!

And yet so lovely, so noble as she looked! Could he speak to her, except in tones of gentle warning, pity, counsel, entreaty? Might he not convert her — save her? Glorious thought! To win such a soul to the true cause! To be able to show, as the first fruits of his mission, the very champion of heathendom! It was worth while to have lived only to do that; and having done it, to die.

The archbishop's lodgings, when he entered them, were in a state of ferment even greater than usual. Groups of monks, priests, parabolani, and citizens rich and poor, were hanging about the courtyard, talking earnestly and angrily. A large party of monks fresh from Nitria, with ragged hair and beards, and the peculiar expression of countenance which fanatics of all creeds acquire, fierce and yet abject, self-conscious and yet ungoverned, silly and yet sly, with features coarsened and degraded by continual fasting and self-torture, prudishly shrouded from head to heel in their long ragged gowns, were gesticulating wildly and loudly, and calling on their more peaceable companions, in no measured terms, to revenge some insult offered to the Church.

"What is the matter?" asked Philammon of a quiet portly citizen, who stood looking up, with a most perplexed visage, at the windows of the patriarch's apartments.

"Don't ask me; I have nothing to do with it. Why does not his Holiness come out and speak to them? Blessed Virgin, mother of God! that we were well through it all! —"

"Coward!" bawled a monk in his ear. "These shopkeepers care for nothing but seeing their stalls

safe. Rather than lose a day's custom, they would give the very churches to be plundered by the heathen!"

"We do not want them!" cried another. "We managed Dioscuros and his brother, and we can manage Orestes. What matter what answer he sends? The devil shall have his own!"

"They ought to have been back two hours ago; they are murdered by this time."

"He would not dare to touch the archdeacon!"

"He will dare anything. Cyril should never have sent them forth as lambs among wolves. What necessity was there for letting the prefect know that the Jews were gone? He would have found it out for himself fast enough, the next time he wanted to borrow money!"

"What is all this about, reverend sir?" asked Philammon of Peter the Reader, who made his appearance at that moment in the quadrangle, walking with great strides, like the soul of Agamemnon across the meads of Asphodel, and apparently beside himself with rage.

"Ah! you here? You may go to-morrow, young fool! The patriarch can't talk to you. Why should he? Some people have a great deal too much notice taken of them, in my opinion. Yes; you may go. If your head is not turned already, you may go and get it turned to-morrow. We shall see whether he who exalts himelf is not abased, before all is over!" And he was striding away, when Philammon, at the risk of an explosion, stopped him.

"His Holiness commanded me to see him, sir, before —"

Peter turned on him in a fury. "Fool! will you dare to intrude your fantastical dreams on him at such a moment as this?"

"He commanded me to see him," said Philammon, with the true soldierlike discipline of a monk; "and see him I will, in spite of any man. I believe in my heart you wish to keep me from his counsels and his blessing."

Peter looked at him for a moment with a right wicked expression, and then, to the youth's astonishment, struck him full in the face, and yelled for help.

If the blow had been given by Pambo in the Laura a week before, Philammon would have borne it. But from that man, and coming unexpectedly as the finishing stroke to all his disappointment and disgust, it was intolerable; and in an instant Peter's long legs were sprawling on the pavement, while he bellowed like a bull for all the monks of Nitria.

A dozen lean brown hands were at Philammon's throat as Peter rose.

"Seize him! hold him!" half blubbered he. "The traitor! the heretic! He holds communion with heathens!"

"Down with him!" "Cast him out!" "Carry him to the archbishop!" while Philammon shook himself free, and Peter returned to the charge.

"I call all good Catholics to witness! He has beaten an ecclesiastic in the courts of the Lord's house, even in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem! And he was in Hypatia's lecture-room this morning!"

A groan of pious horror rose. Philammon set his back against the wall.

"His holiness the patriarch sent me."

"He confesses, he confesses! He deluded the piety of the patriarch into letting him go, under colour of converting her; and even now he wants to intrude on the sacred presence of Cyril, burning only with carnal desire that he may meet the sorceress in her house to-morrow!"

"Scandal!" "Abomination in the holy place!" and a rush at the poor youth took place.

His blood was thoroughly up. The respectable part of the crowd, as usual in such cases, prudently retreated, and left him to the mercy of the monks, with an eye to their own reputation for orthodoxy, not to mention their own personal safety; and he had to help himself as he could. He looked round for a weapon. There was none. The ring of monks were baying at him like hounds round a bear; and though he might have been a match for any one of them singly, yet their sinewy limbs and determined faces warned him that against such odds the struggle would be desperate.

"Let me leave this court in safety! God knows whether I am an heretic; and to Him I commit my cause. The holy patriarch shall know of your iniquity. I will not trouble you; I give you leave to call me heretic, or heathen, if you will, if I cross this threshold till Cyril himself sends for me back to shame you."

And he turned, and forced his way to the gate, amid a yell of derision which brought every drop of blood in his body into his cheeks. Twice, as he went down the vaulted passage, a rush was made on him from behind, but the soberer of his persecutors checked it. Yet he could not leave them, young and

hot-headed as he was, without one last word, and on the threshold he turned.

"You! who call yourselves the disciples of the Lord, and are more like the demoniacs who abode day and night in the tombs, crying and cutting themselves with stones —"

In an instant they rushed upon him; and luckily for him, rushed also into the arms of a party of ecclesiastics, who were hurrying inwards from the street, with faces of blank terror.

"He has refused!" shouted the foremost. "He declares war against the Church of God!"

"Oh my friends," panted the archdeacon, "we are escaped like the bird out of the snare of the fowler. The tyrant kept us waiting two hours at his palace gates, and then sent lictors out upon us, with rods and axes, telling us that they were the only message which he had for robbers and rioters."

"Back to the patriarch!" And the whole mob streamed in again, leaving Philammon alone in the street — and in the world.

Whither now?

He strode on in his wrath some hundred yards or more, before he asked himself that question. And when he asked it, he found himself in no humour to answer it. He was adrift, and blown out of harbour upon a shoreless sea, in utter darkness; all heaven and earth were nothing to him. He was alone in the blindness of anger.

Gradually one fixed idea, as a light-tower, began to glimmer through the storm. . . . . To see Hypatia, and convert her. He had the patriarch's leave for that. That must be right. That would justify him —

bring him back, perhaps, in a triumph more glorious than any Cæsar's, leading captive, in the fetters of the Gospel, the Queen of Heathendom. Yes, there was that left, for which to live.

His passion cooled down gradually as he wandered on in the fading evening light, up one street and down another, till he had utterly lost his way. What matter? He should find that Lecture-room to-morrow, at least. At last he found himself in a broad avenue which he seemed to know. Was that the Sun-gate in the distance? He sauntered carelessly down it, and found himself at last on the great Esplanade, whither the little porter had taken him three days before. He was close then to the Museum, and to her house. Destiny had led him, unconsciously, towards the scene of his enterprise. It was a good omen; he would go thither at once. He might sleep upon her door-step as well as upon any other. Perhaps he might catch a glimpse of her going out or coming in, even at that late hour. It might be well to accustom himself to the sight of her. There would be the less chance of his being abashed to-morrow before these sorceress eyes. And moreover, to tell the truth, his self-dependence, and his self-will too, crushed, or rather laid to sleep, by the discipline of the Laura, had started into wild life, and gave him a mysterious pleasure which he had not felt since he was a disobedient little boy, of doing what he chose, right or wrong, simply because he chose it. Such moments come to every free-willed creature. Happy are those who have not, like poor Philammon, been kept by a hotbed cultivation from knowing how to face them. But he had yet to learn, or rather his tutors had to learn, that the sure path toward willing obe-

dience and manful self-restraint, lies not through slavery, but through liberty.

He was not certain which was Hypatia's house; but the door of the Museum he could not forget. So there he sat himself down under the garden-wall, soothed by the cool night, and the holy silence, and the rich perfume of the thousand foreign flowers which filled the air with enervating balm. There he sat, and watched, and watched, and watched in vain for some glimpse of his one object. Which of the houses was hers? Which was the window of her chamber? Did it look into the street? What business had his fancy with women's chambers? . . . . But that one open window, with the lamp burning bright inside — he could not help looking up to it — he could not help fancying — hoping. He even moved a few yards, to see better the bright interior of the room. High up as it was, he could still discern shelves of books — pictures on the walls. Was that a voice? Yes! — a woman's voice — reading aloud in metre — was plainly distinguishable in the dead stillness of the night, which did not even awaken a whisper in the trees above his head. He stood, spell-bound by curiosity.

Suddenly the voice ceased, and a woman's figure came forward to the window, and stood motionless, gazing upward at the spangled star-world overhead, and seeming to drink in the glory, and the silence, and the rich perfume. . . . . Could it be she? Every pulse in his body throbbed madly. . . . . Could it be? What was she doing? He could not distinguish the features; but the full blaze of the eastern moon showed him an upturned brow, between a golden stream of glittering tresses which hid her whole figure, except the white

hands clasped upon her bosom. .... Was she praying? were these her midnight sorceries? ....

And still his heart throbbed and throbbed, till he almost fancied she must hear its noisy beat — and still she stood motionless, gazing upon the sky, like some exquisite chryselephantine statue, all ivory and gold. And behind her, round the bright room within, painting, books, a whole world of unknown science and beauty .... and she the priestess of it all .... inviting him to learn of her and be wise? It was a temptation! He would flee from it! — Fool that he was! and it might not be she after all!

He made some sudden movement. She looked down, saw him, and shutting the blind, vanished for the night. In vain, now that the temptation had departed, he sat and waited for its reappearance, half cursing himself for having broken the spell. But the chamber was dark and silent henceforth; and Philammon, wearied out, found himself soon wandering back to the Laura in quiet dreams, beneath the balmy semitropic night.

CHAPTER X.

The Interview.

PHILAMMON was aroused from his slumbers at sunrise the next morning by the attendants who came in to sweep out the lecture-rooms, and wandered, disconsolately enough, up and down the street; longing for, and yet dreading the three weary hours to be over which must pass before he would be admitted to Hypatia. But he had tasted no food since noon the day before: he had had but three hours' sleep the previous night, and had been working, running and fighting for two whole days without a moment's peace of body or mind. Sick with hunger and fatigue, and aching from head to foot with his hard night's rest on the granite flags, he felt as unable as man could well do, to collect his thoughts or brace his nerves for the coming interview. How to get food he could not guess: but having two hands, he might at least earn a coin by carrying a load; so he went down to the Esplanade, in search of work. Of that, alas, there was none. So he sat down upon the parapet of the quay, and watched the shoals of sardines which played in and out over the marble steps below, and wondered at the strange crabs and sealocusts which crawled up and down the face of the masonry, a few feet below the surface, scrambling for bits of offal, and making occasional fruitless dashes at

the nimble little silver arrows which played round them. And at last his whole soul, too tired to think of anything else, became absorbed in a mighty struggle between two great crabs, who held on stoutly, each by a claw, to his respective bunch of seaweed, while with the others they tugged, one at the head and the other at the tail, of a dead fish. Which would conquer?.... Ay, which? And for five minutes Philammon was alone in the world with the two struggling heroes.... Might not they be emblematic? Might not the upper one typify Cyril? — the lower one Hypatia? — and the dead fish between, himself? .... But at last the dead-lock was suddenly ended — the fish parted in the middle, and the typical Hypatia and Cyril, losing hold of their respective seaweeds, by the jerk, tumbled down, each with its half fish, and vanished head over heels into the blue depths in so undignified a manner, that Philammon burst into a shout of laughter.

"What's the joke?" asked a well-known voice behind him; and a hand patted him familiarly on the back. He looked round, and saw the little porter, his head crowned with a full basket of figs, grapes, and water-melons, on which the poor youth cast a longing eye. "Well, my young friend, and why are you not at church? Look at all the saints pouring into the Cæsareum there, behind you."

Philammon answered sulkily enough something inarticulate.

"Ho, ho! Quarrelled with the successor of the apostles already? Has my prophecy come true, and the strong meat of pious riot and plunder proved too highly spiced for your young palate. Eh?"

Poor Philammon! Angry with himself for feeling

that the porter was right; shrinking from the notion of exposing the failings of his fellow-Christians; shrinking still more, from making such a jackanapes his confidant: and yet yearning in his loneliness to open his heart to some one, he dropped out, hint by hint, word by word, the events of the past evening; and finished by a request to be put in the way of earning his breakfast.

"Earning your breakfast? Shall the favourite of the gods — shall the guest of Hypatia earn his breakfast, while I have an obol to share with him? Base thought! Youth! I have wronged you. Unphilosophically I allowed, yesterday morning, envy to ruffle the ocean of my intellect. We are now friends and brothers, in hatred to the monastic tribe."

"I do not hate them, I tell you," said Philammon. "But these Nitrian savages" —

"Are the perfect examples of monkery, and you hate them; and therefore, all greaters containing the less, you hate all less monastic monks — I have not heard logic lectures in vain. Now, up! The sea woos our dusty limbs; Nereids and Tritons, charging no cruel coin, call us to Nature's baths. At home a mighty sheat-fish smokes upon the festive board; beer crowns the horn, and onions deck the dish: come then, my guest and brother!"

Philammon swallowed certain scruples about becoming the guest of a heathen, seeing that otherwise there seemed no chance of having anything else to swallow; and after a refreshing plunge in the sea, followed the hospitable little fellow to Hypatia's door, where he dropped his daily load of fruit, and then into a narrow by-street, to the ground-floor of a huge block

of lodgings, with a common staircase, swarming with children, cats, and chickens; and was ushered by his host into a little room, where the savoury smell of broiling fish revived Philammon's heart.

"Judith! Judith! where lingerest thou? Marble of Pentelicus! Foam-flake of the wine-dark main! Lily of the Mareotic lake! You accursed black Andromeda, if you don't bring the breakfast this moment, I'll cut you in two!"

The inner door opened, and in bustled, trembling, her hands full of dishes, a tall lithe negress, dressed in true negro fashion, in a snow-white cotton shift, a scarlet cotton petticoat, and a bright yellow turban of the same, making a light in that dark place which would have served as a land-mark a mile off. She put the dishes down, and the porter majestically waved Philammon to a stool, while she retreated, and stood humbly waiting on her lord and master, who did not deign to introduce to his guest the black beauty which composed his whole seraglio. . . . . But, indeed, such an act of courtesy would have been needless, for the first morsel of fish was hardly safe in poor Philammon's mouth, when the negress rushed upon him, caught him by the head, and covered him with rapturous kisses.

Up jumped the little man with a yell, brandishing a knife in one hand and a leek in the other, while Philammon, scarcely less scandalized, jumped up too, and shook himself free of the lady, who, finding it impossible to vent her feelings further on his head, instantly changed her tactics, and wallowing on the floor, began franticly kissing his feet.

"What is this? Before my face! Up, shameless

baggage, or thou diest the death!" and the porter pulled her up upon her knees.

"It is the monk! the young man I told you of, who saved me from the Jews the other night! What good angel sent him here that I might thank him?" cried the poor creature, while the tears ran down her black shining face.

"I am that good angel," said the porter, with a look of intense self-satisfaction. "Rise, daughter of Erebus; thou art pardoned, being but a female. What says the poet?

> Woman is passion's slave, while rightful lord
> O'er her and passion, rules the nobler male.

Youth! to my arms! Truly say the philosophers, that the universe is magical in itself, and by mysterious sympathies links like to like. The prophetic instinct of thy future benefits towards me drew me to thee as by an invisible warp, hawser, or chain cable, from the moment I beheld thee. Thou wert a kindred spirit, my brother, though thou knewest it not. Therefore I do not praise thee — no, nor thank thee in the least, though thou hast preserved for me the one palm which shadows my weary steps — the single lotus-flower (in this case black, not white) which blooms for me above the mud-stained ocean-wastes of the Hylic Borboros. That which thou hast done, thou hast done by instinct — by divine compulsion — thou couldst no more help it than thou canst help eating that fish; and art no more to be praised for it."

"Thank you," said Philammon.

"Comprehend me. Our theory in the schools for such cases is this — has been so at least for the last

six months — similar particles, from one original source, exist in you and me. Similar causes produce similar effects; our attractions, antipathies, impulses, are therefore, in similar circumstances, absolutely the same; and therefore you did the other night — exactly what I should have done in your case."

Philammon thought the latter part of the theory open to question, but he had by no means stopped eating when he rose, and his mouth was much too full of fish to argue.

"And therefore," continued the little man, "we are to consider ourselves henceforth as one soul in two bodies. You may have the best of the corporeal part of the division . . . . yet it is the soul which makes the person. You may trust me, I shall not disdain my brotherhood. If any one insults you henceforth, you have but to call for me; and, if I be within hearing, why, by this right arm —"

And he attempted a pat on Philammon's head, which, as there was a head and shoulders difference between them, might on the whole have been considered, from a theatric point of view, as a failure. Whereon the little man seized the calabash of beer, and filling therewith a cow's-horn, his thumb on the small end, raised it high in air.

"To the Tenth Muse, and to your interview with her!"

And removing his thumb, he sent a steady jet into his open mouth, and having drained the horn without drawing breath, licked his lips, handed it to Philammon, and flew ravenously upon the fish and onions.

Philammon, to whom the whole was supremely absurd, had no invocation to make, but one which he felt

too sacred for his present temper of mind, so he attempted to imitate the little man's feat, and, of course, poured the beer into his eyes, and up his nose, and in his bosom, and finally choked himself black in the face, while his host observed, smilingly —

"Aha? rustic? unacquainted with the ancient and classical customs preserved in this centre of civilization by the descendants of Alexander's heroes? Judith! clear the table. Now to the sanctuary of the Muses!"

Philammon rose, and finished his meal by a monkish grace. A gentle and reverend "Amen" rose from the other end of the room. It was the negress. She saw him look up at her, dropped her eyes modestly, and bustled away with the remnants, while Philammon and his host started for Hypatia's lecture-room.

"Your wife is a Christian?" asked he, when they were outside the door.

"Ahem —! The barbaric mind is prone to superstition. Yet she is, being but a woman and a negress, a good soul, and thrifty, though requiring, like all lower animals, occasional chastisement. I married her on philosophic grounds. A wife was necessary to me, for several reasons: but mindful that the philosopher should subjugate the material appetite, and rise above the swinish desires of the flesh, even when his nature requires him to satisfy them, I purposed to make pleasure as unpleasant as possible. I had the choice of several cripples — their parents, of ancient Macedonian family, like myself, were by no means adverse; but I required a housekeeper, with whose duties the want of an arm or a leg might have interfered."

"Why did you not marry a scold?" asked Philammon.

"Pertinently observed. And, indeed, the example of Socrates rose luminous more than once before my imagination. But philosophic calm, my dear youth, and the peaceful contemplation of the ineffable? I could not relinquish these luxuries. So having, by the bounty of Hypatia and her pupils, saved a small sum, I went out, bought me a negress, and hired six rooms in the block we have just left, where I let lodgings to young students of the Divine Philosophy."

"Have you any lodgers now?"

"Ahem! Certain rooms are occupied by a lady of rank. The philosopher will, above all things, abstain from babbling. To bridle the tongue, is to —. But there is a closet at your service; and for the hall of reception, which you have just left — are you not a kindred and fraternal spark? We can combine our meals, as our souls are already united."

Philammon thanked him heartily for the offer, though he shrank from accepting it; and in ten minutes more found himself at the door of the very house which he had been watching the night before. It was she, then, whom he had seen! . . . He was handed over by a black porter to a smart slave-girl, who guided him up through cloisters and corridors to the large library, where five or six young men were sitting, busily engaged, under Theon's superintendence, in copying manuscripts and drawing geometric diagrams.

Philammon gazed curiously at these symbols of a science unknown to him, and wondered whether the day would ever come when he too would understand their mysteries; but his eyes fell again as he saw the youths staring at his ragged sheepskin and matted locks with undisguised contempt. He could hardly collect

himself enough to obey the summons of the venerable old man, as he beckoned him silently out of the room, and led him, with the titters of the young students ringing in his ears, through the door by which he had entered, and along a gallery, till he stopped and knocked humbly at a door. . . . . She must be within! . . . . Now! . . . At last! . . . . His knees knocked together under him. His heart sank and sank into abysses. Poor wretch! . . . . He was half-minded once to escape and dash into the street . . . . but was it not his one hope, his one object? . . . . But why did not that old man speak? If he would have but said something . . . . If he would have only looked cross, contemptuous. . . . . But with the same impressive gravity as of a man upon a business in which he had no voice, and wished it to be understood that he had none, the old man silently opened the door, and Philammon followed. . . . . There she was! Looking more glorious than ever; more than when glowing with the enthusiasm of her own eloquence; more than when transfigured last night in golden tresses and glittering moonbeams. There she sat, without moving a finger, as the two entered. She greeted her father with a smile, which made up for all her seeming want of courtesy to him, and then fixed her large grey eyes full on Philammon.

"Here is the youth, my daughter. It was your wish, you know; and I always believe that you know best —"

Another smile put an end to the speech, and the old man retreated humbly toward another door, with a somewhat anxious visage, and then lingering and looking back, his hand upon the latch.

"If you require any one, you know, you have only to call — we shall be all in the library."

Another smile; and the old man disappeared, leaving the two alone.

Philammon stood trembling, choking, his eyes fixed on the floor. Where were all the fine things he had conned over for the occasion? He dared not look up at that face, lest it should drive them out of his head. And yet the more he kept his eyes turned from the face, the more he was conscious of it, conscious that it was watching him; and the more all the fine words were, by that very knowledge, driven out of his head. .... When would she speak? Perhaps she wished him to speak first. It was her duty to begin; for she had sent for him. .... But still she kept silence, and sat scanning him intently from head to foot, herself as motionless as a statue; her hands folded together before her, over the manuscript which lay upon her knee. If there was a blush on her cheek at her own daring, his eyes swam too much to notice it.

When would the intolerable suspense end? She was, perhaps, as unwilling to speak as he. But some one must strike the first blow; and, as often happens, the weaker party, impelled by sheer fear, struck it, and broke the silence in a tone half indignant, half apologetic —

"You sent for me hither!"

"I did. It seemed to me, as I watched you during my lecture, both before and after you were rude enough to interrupt me, that your offence was one of mere youthful ignorance. It seemed to me that your countenance bespoke a nobler nature than that which the gods are usually pleased to bestow upon monks. That

I may now ascertain whether or not my surmises were correct, I ask you for what purpose are you come hither?"

Philammon hailed the question as a godsend. — Now for his message! And yet he faltered, as he answered with a desperate effort, — "To rebuke you for your sins."

"My sins? What sins?" she asked, as she looked up with a stately, slow surprise in those large grey eyes, before which his own glance sank abashed, he knew not why. What sins? — He knew not. Did she look like a Messalina? But was she not a heathen and a sorceress? — and yet he blushed, and stammered, and hung down his head, as, shrinking at the sound of his own words, he replied, —

"The foul sorceries — and profligacy worse than sorceries, in which they say" — He could get no farther: for he looked up again and saw an awful quiet smile upon that face. His words had raised no blush upon the marble cheek.

"They say! The bigots and slanderers; wild beasts of the desert, and fanatic intriguers, who, in the words of Him they call their master, compass heaven and earth to make one proselyte, and when they have found him, make him twofold more the child of hell than themselves. Go — I forgive you — you are young, and know not yet the mystery of the world. Science will teach you some day that the outward frame is the sacrament of the soul's inward beauty. Such a soul I had fancied your face expressed; but I was mistaken. Foul hearts alone harbour such foul suspicions, and fancy others to be, what they know they might become themselves. Go! Do I look like —? The very taper-

ing of these images. If thou couldst read their symbolism, would give your license to it." And she flashed full on him like sun-rays from a mirror, the full radiance of her glorious countenance.

Alas, poor Philammon! where were thy eloquent arguments, thy orthodox theories then? Proudly he struggled with his own man's heart of flesh, and tried to turn his eyes away: the magnet might as well struggle to escape from the spell of the north. In a moment, he knew not how, utter shame, remorse, longing for forgiveness, swept over him, and crushed him down; and he found himself on his knees before her, in abject and broken syllables entreating pardon.

"Go — I forgive you. But know before you go, that the celestial milk which fell from Here's bosom, bleaching the plant which it touched to everlasting whiteness, was not more taintless than the soul of Theon's daughter."

He looked up in her face as he knelt before her. Unerring instinct told him that her words were true. He was a monk — accustomed to believe animal sin to be the deadliest and worst of all sins — indeed, "the great offence" itself, beside which all others were comparatively venial: where there was physical purity must not all other virtues follow in its wake? All other failings were invisible under the dazzling veil of that great loveliness — and in his self-abasement he went on —

"Oh, do not spurn me! Do not drive me away! I have neither friend, home, nor teacher. I fled last night from the men of my own faith, maddened by bitter insult and injustice — disappointed and disgusted with their ferocity, narrowness, ignorance. I dare not,

I cannot, I will not return to the obscurity and the dulness of a Thebaid Laura. I have a thousand doubts to solve, a thousand questions to ask, about that great ancient world of which I know nothing — of whose mysteries, they say, you alone possess the key! I am a Christian; but I thirst for knowledge. . . . I do not promise to believe you — I do not promise to obey you; but let me hear! Teach me what you know, that I may compare it with what I know. . . . . If indeed" (and he shuddered as he spoke the words) "I do know anything!"

"Have you forgotten the epithets which you used to me just now?"

"No, no! But do you forget them; they were put into my mouth. I — I did not believe them when I said them. It was agony to me; but I did it, as I thought, for your sake — to save you. Oh, say that I may come and hear you again! Only from a distance — in the very farthest corner of your lecture-room. I will be silent; you shall never see me. But your words yesterday awoke in me — no, not doubts; but still I must, I must hear more, or be as miserable and homeless inwardly as I am in my outward circumstances!" And he looked up imploringly for consent.

"Rise. This passion and that attitude are fitting neither for you nor me."

And as Philammon rose, she rose also, went into the library to her father, and in a few minutes returned with him.

"Come with me, young man," said he, laying his hand kindly enough on Philammon's shoulder. . . . . "The rest of this matter you and I can settle;" and

Philammon followed him, not daring to look back at Hypatia, while the whole room swam before his eyes.

"So, so, I hear you have been saying rude things to my daughter. Well, she has forgiven you —"

"Has she?" asked the young monk, with an eager start.

"Ah! you may well look astonished. But I forgive you, too. It is lucky for you, however, that I did not hear you, or else, old man as I am, I can't say what I might not have done. Ah, you little know, you little know what she is!" — and the old pedant's eyes kindled with loving pride — "May the gods give you some day such a daughter! — that is, if you learn to deserve it — as virtuous as she is wise, as wise as she is beautiful. Truly, they have repaid me for my labours in their service. Look, young man! little as you merit it, here is a pledge of your forgiveness, such as the richest and noblest in Alexandria are glad to purchase with many an ounce of gold — a ticket of free admission to all her lectures henceforth! Now go; you have been favoured beyond your deserts, and should learn that the philosopher can practise what the Christian only preaches, and return good for evil." And he put into Philammon's hand a slip of paper, and bid one of the secretaries show him to the outer door.

The youths looked up at him from their writing as he passed, with faces of surprise and awe, and evidently thinking no more about the absurdity of his sheepskin and his tanned complexion; and he went out with a stunned, confused feeling, as of one who, by a

desperate leap, has plunged into a new world. He tried to feel content; but he dare not. All before him was anxiety, uncertainty. He had cut himself adrift; he was on the great stream. Whither would it lead him? Well — was it not the great stream? Had not all mankind, for all the ages, been floating on it? Or, was it but a desert river, dwindling away beneath the fiery sun, destined to lose itself a few miles on, among the arid sands? Were Arsenius, and the faith of his childhood right? And was the Old World coming speedily to its death-throe, and the kingdom of God at hand? Or, was Cyril right, and the Church Catholic appointed to spread, and conquer, and destroy, and rebuild, till the kingdoms of this world had become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ? If so — what use in this old knowledge which he craved? And yet, if the day of the destruction of all things were at hand, and the times destined to become worse and not better, till the end — how could that be? ....

"What news?" asked the little porter, who had been waiting for him at the door all the while. "What news, O favourite of the gods!"

"I will lodge with you, and labour with you. Ask me no more at present. I am — I am —"

"Those who descended into the cave of Trophonius, and beheld the unspeakable, remained astonished for three days, my young friend — and so will you!" And they went forth together to earn their bread.

But what is Hypatia doing all this while, upon that cloudy Olympus, where she sits enshrined far

above the noise and struggle of man and his work-day world?

She is sitting again, with her manuscript open before her: but she is thinking of the young monk, not of them.

"Beautiful as Antinous! .... Rather as the young Phœbus himself, fresh glowing from the slaughter of the Python. Why should not he, too, become a slayer of Pythons, and loathsome monsters, bred from the mud of sense and matter? So bold and earnest! — I can forgive him those words for the very fact of his having dared, here in my father's house, to say them to me .... And yet so tender, so open to repentance and noble shame! — That is no plebeian by birth: patrician blood surely flows in those veins; it shows out in every attitude, every tone, every motion of the hand and lip. He cannot be one of the herd. Who ever knew one of them crave after knowledge for its own sake? .... And I have longed so for one real pupil! I have longed so to find one such man, among the effeminate selfish triflers who pretend to listen to me. I thought I had found one — and the moment that I had lost him, behold, I find another; and that a fresher, purer, simpler nature than ever Raphael's was at its best. By all the laws of physiognomy, by all the symbolism of gesture and voice, and complexion, by the instinct of my own heart, that young monk might be the instrument, the ready, valiant, obedient instrument for carrying out all my dreams. If I could but train him into a Longinus, I could dare to play the part of a Zenobia, with him as counsellor. .... And for my Odenatus — Orestes? Horrible!"

She covered her face with her hand a minute. — No!" she said, dashing away the tears — "That — nd anything — and everything for the cause of Phi-›sophy and the gods!"

CHAPTER XI.

The Laura Again.

Not a sound, nor a moving object, broke the utter stillness of the glen of Scetis. The shadows of the crags, though paling every moment before the spreading dawn, still shrouded all the gorge in gloom. A winding line of haze slept above the course of the rivulet. The plumes of the palm-trees hung motionless, as if awaiting in resignation the breathless blaze of the approaching day. At length, among the green ridges of the monastery garden, two grey figures rose from their knees, and began, with slow and feeble strokes, to break the silence by the clatter of their hoes among the pebbles.

"These beans grow wonderfully, brother Aufugus. We shall be able to sow our second crop, by God's blessing, a week earlier than we did last year."

The person addressed returned no answer; and his companion, after watching him for some time in silence, recommenced —

"What is it, my brother? I have remarked lately a melancholy about you, which is hardly fitting for a man of God."

A deep sigh was the only answer. The speaker laid down his hoe, and placing his hand affectionately on the shoulder of Aufugus, asked again —

"What is it, my friend? I will not claim with you my abbot's right to know the secrets of your heart: but surely that breast hides nothing which is unworthy to be spoken to me, however unworthy I may be to hear it."

"Why should I not be sad, Pambo, my friend? Does not Solomon say that there is a time for mourning?"

"True: but a time for mirth also."

"None to the penitent, burdened with the guilt of many sins."

"Recollect what the blessed Anthony used to say — 'Trust not in thine own righteousness, and regret not that which is past.'"

"I do neither, Pambo."

"Do not be too sure of that. Is it not because thou art still trusting in thyself, that thou dost regret the past, which shows thee that thou art not that which thou wouldst gladly pride thyself on being?"

"Pambo, my friend," said Arsenius, solemnly, "I will tell thee all. My sins are not yet past; for Honorius, my pupil, still lives, and in him lives the weakness and the misery of Rome. My sins past? If they are, why do I see rising before me, night after night, that train of accusing spectres, ghosts of men slain in battle, widows and orphans, virgins of the Lord shrieking in the grasp of barbarians, who stand by my bedside, and cry, 'Hadst thou done thy duty, we had not been thus! Where is that imperial charge which God committed to thee?'" .... And the old man hid his face in his hands, and wept bitterly.

Pambo laid his hand again tenderly on the weeper's shoulder.

"Is there no pride here, my brother? Who art thou, to change the fate of nations and the hearts of emperors, which are in the hand of the King of kings. If thou wert weak, and imperfect in the work — for unfaithful, I will warrant thee, thou wert never — He put thee there, because thou wert imperfect, that so that which has come to pass might come to pass; and thou bearest thine own burden only — and yet not thou; but He who bore it for thee."

"Why then am I tormented by these nightly visions?"

"Fear them not, friend. They are spirits of evil, and therefore lying spirits. Were they good spirits, they would speak to thee only in pity, forgiveness, encouragement. But be they ghosts or demons, they must be evil, because they are accusers, like the Evil One himself, the accuser of the saints. He is the father of lies, and his children will be like himself. What said the blessed Anthony? That a monk should not busy his brain with painting spectres, or give himself up for lost; but rather be cheerful, as one who knows that he is redeemed, and in the hands of the Lord, where the evil one has no power to hurt him. 'For,' he used to say, 'the demons behave to us even as they find us. If they see us cast down and faithless, they terrify us still more, that they may plunge us in despair. But if they see us full of faith, and joyful in the Lord, with our souls filled with the glory which shall be, then they shrink abashed, and flee away in confusion.' Cheer up, friend, such thoughts are of the night, the hour of Satan and of the powers of darkness; and with the dawn they flee away."

"And yet things are revealed to men upon their beds, in visions of the night."

"Be it so. Nothing, at all events, has been revealed to thee upon thy bed, except that which thou knowest already far better than Satan does, namely, that thou art a sinner. But for me, my friend, though I doubt not that such things are, it is the day, and not the night, which brings revelations."

"How, then?"

"Because by day I can see to read that book which is written, like the Law given on Sinai, upon tables of stone, by the finger of God himself."

Arsenius looked up at him inquiringly. Pambo smiled.

"Thou knowest that, like many holy men of old, I am no scholar, and knew not even the Greek tongue, till thou, out of thy brotherly kindness, taughtest it to me. But hast thou never heard what Anthony said to a certain Pagan who reproached him with his ignorance of books? 'Which is first,' he asked, 'spirit, or letter? — Spirit, sayest thou? Then know, the healthy spirit needs no letters. My book is the whole creation, lying open before me, wherein I can read, whensoever I please, the word of God.'"

"Dost thou not undervalue learning, my friend?"

"I am old among monks, and have seen much of their ways; and among them my simplicity seems to have seen this — many a man wearying himself with study, and tormenting his soul as to whether he believed rightly this doctrine and that, while he knew not with Solomon that in much learning is much sorrow, and that while he was puzzling at the letter of God's mes-

sage, the spirit of it was going fast and faster out of him."

"And how didst thou know that of such a man?"

"By seeing him become a more and more learned theologian, and more and more zealous for the letter of orthodoxy; and yet less and less loving and merciful — less and less full of trust in God, and of hopeful thoughts for himself and for his brethren, till he seemed to have darkened his whole soul with disputations, which breed only strife, and to have forgotten utterly the message which is written in that book wherewith the blessed Anthony was content."

"Of what message dost thou speak?"

"Look," said the old abbot, stretching his hand toward the Eastern desert, "and judge, like a wise man, for thyself!"

As he spoke, a long arrow of level light flashed down the gorge from crag to crag, awakening every crack and slab to vividness and life. The great crimson sun rose swiftly through the dim night-mist of the desert, and as he poured his glory down the glen, the haze rose in threads and plumes, and vanished, leaving the stream to sparkle round the rocks, like the living, twinkling eye of the whole scene. Swallows flashed by hundreds out of the cliffs, and began their air-dance for the day; the jerboa hopped stealthily homeward on his stilts from his stolen meal in the monastery garden; the brown sand-lizards underneath the stones opened one eyelid each, and having satisfied themselves that it was day, dragged their bloated bodies and whip-like tails out into the most burning patch of gravel which they could find, and nestling together as a further protection against cold, fell fast asleep again; the buzzard,

who considered himself lord of the valley, awoke with a long querulous bark, and rising aloft in two or three vast rings, to stretch himself after his night's sleep, hung motionless, watching every lark which chirrupped on the cliffs; while from the far-off Nile below, the awakening croak of pelicans, the clang of geese, the whistle of the godwit and curlew, came ringing up the windings of the glen; and last of all the voices of the monks rose, chanting a morning hymn to some wild Eastern air; and a new day had begun in Scetis, like those which went before, and those which were to follow after, week after week, year after year, of toil and prayer as quiet as its sleep.

"What does that teach thee, Aufugus, my friend?"

Arsenius was silent.

"To me it teaches this: that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. That in His presence is life, and fulness of joy for evermore. That He is the giver, who delights in His own bounty; the lover, whose mercy is over all His works — and why not over thee too, O thou of little faith? Look at those thousand birds — and without our Father not one of them shall fall to the ground: and art thou not of more value than many sparrows, thou for whom God sent his Son to die? .... Ah, my friend, we must look out and around, to see what God is like. It is when we persist in turning our eyes inward, and prying curiously over our own imperfections, that we learn to make a God after our own image, and fancy that our own darkness and hardness of heart are the patterns of His light and love."

"Thou speakest rather as a philosopher than as a penitent Catholic. For me, I feel that I want to look

more, and not less, inward. Deeper self-examination, completer abstraction, than I can attain even here, are what I crave for. I long — forgive me, my friend — but I long more and more, daily, for the solitary life. This earth is accursed by man's sin: the less we see of it, it seems to me, the better."

"I may speak as a philosopher, or as a heathen, for aught I know: yet it seems to me that, as they say, the half loaf is better than none; that the wise man will make the best of what he has, and throw away no lesson because the book is somewhat torn and soiled. The earth teaches me thus far already. Shall I shut my eyes to those invisible things of God which are clearly manifested by the things which are made, because some day they will be more clearly manifested than now? But as for more abstraction, are we so worldly here in Scetis?"

"Nay, my friend, each man has surely his vocation, and for each some peculiar method of life is more edifying than another. In my case, the habits of mind which I acquired in the world will cling to me in spite of myself even here. I cannot help watching the doings of others, studying their characters, planning and plotting for them, trying to prognosticate their future fate. Not a word, not a gesture of this our little family, but turns away my mind from the one thing needful."

"And do you fancy that the anchorite in his cell has fewer distractions?"

"What can he have but the supply of the mere necessary wants of life; and them, even, he may abridge to the gathering of a few roots and herbs. Men have lived like the beasts already, that they might

at the same time live like the angels — and why should not I also?"

"And thou art the wise man of the world — the student of the hearts of others — the anatomizer of thine own? Hast thou not found out that, beside a craving stomach, man carries with him a corrupt heart? Many a man I have seen, who, in his haste to fly from the fiends without him, has forgotten to close the door of his heart against worse fiends who were ready to harbour within him. Many a monk, friend, changes his place, but not the anguish of his soul. I have known those who, driven to feed on their own thoughts in solitude, have desperately cast themselves from cliffs, or ripped up their own bodies, in the longing to escape from thoughts, from which one companion, one kindly voice, might have delivered them. I have known those, too, who have been so puffed up by those very penances which were meant to humble them, that they have despised all means of grace, as though they were already perfect, and refusing even the holy Eucharist, have lived in self-glorying dreams and visions suggested by the evil spirits. One such I knew, who, in the madness of his pride, refused to be counselled by any mortal man — saying that he would call no man master: and what befel him? He who used to pride himself on wandering a day's journey into the desert without food or drink, who boasted that he could sustain life for three months at a time only on wild herbs and the Blessed Bread, seized with an inward fire, fled from his cell back to the theatres, the circus, and the taverns, and ended his miserable days in desperate gluttony,

holding all things to be but phantasms, denying his own existence, and that of God himself."

Arsenius shook his head.

"Be it so. But my case is different. I have yet more to confess, my friend. Day by day I am more and more haunted by the remembrance of that world from which I fled. I know that if I returned I should feel no pleasure in those pomps, which, even while I battened on them, I despised. Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women; or discern any longer what I eat or what I drink? And yet — the palaces of those seven hills, their statesmen and their generals, their intrigues, their falls, and their triumphs — for they might rise and conquer yet! — for no moment are they out of my imagination, — no moment in which they are not tempting me back to them, like a moth to the candle which has already scorched him, with a dreadful spell, which I must at last obey, wretch that I am, against my own will, or break by fleeing into some outer desert, from whence return will be impossible!"

Pambo smiled.

"Again I say, this is the worldly wise man, the searcher of hearts! And he would fain flee from the little Laura, which does turn his thoughts at times from such vain dreams, to a solitude where he will be utterly unable to escape those dreams. Well, friend! — and what if thou art troubled at times by anxieties and schemes for this brother and for that? Better to be anxious for others than only for thyself. Better to have something to love — even something to weep over — than to become in some lonely cavern thine

own world, — perhaps, as more than one whom I have known, thine own God."

"Do you know what you are saying?" asked Arsenius, in a startled tone.

"I say, that by fleeing into solitude a man cuts himself off from all which makes a Christian man; from law, obedience, fellow-help, self-sacrifice — from the communion of saints itself."

"How then?"

"How canst thou hold communion with those toward whom thou canst show no love? And how canst thou show thy love but by works of love?"

"I can, at least, pray day and night for all mankind. Has that no place — or rather, has it not the mightiest place — in the communion of saints?"

"He who cannot pray for his brothers whom he does see, and whose sins and temptations he knows, will pray but dully, my friend Aufugus, for his brothers whom he does not see, or for anything else. And he who will not labour for his brothers, the same will soon cease to pray for them, or love them either. And then, what is written? 'If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how will he love God whom he hath not seen?'"

"Again, I say, do you know whither your argument leads?"

"I am a plain man, and know nothing about arguments. If a thing be true, let it lead where it will, for it leads where God wills."

"But at this rate, it were better for a man to take a wife, and have children, and mix himself up in all the turmoil of carnal affections, in order to have as many as possible to love, and fear for, and work for."

Pambo was silent a while.

"I am a monk, and no logician. But this I say, that thou leavest not the Laura for the desert with my good will. I would rather, had I my wish, see thy wisdom installed somewhere nearer the metropolis — at Troë or Canopus, for example — where thou mightest be at hand to fight the Lord's battles. Why wert thou taught worldly wisdom, but to use it for the good of the Church? It is enough. Let us go."

And the two old men walked homeward across the valley, little guessing the practical answer which was ready for their argument, in Abbot Pambo's cell, in the shape of a tall and grim ecclesiastic, who was busily satisfying his hunger with dates and millet, and by no means refusing the palm-wine, the sole delicacy of the monastery, which had been brought forth only in honour of a guest.

The stately and courteous hospitality of Eastern manners, as well as the self-restraining kindliness of monastic Christianity, forbade the abbot to interrupt the stranger; and it was not till he had finished a hearty meal that Pambo asked his name and errand.

"My unworthiness is called Peter the Reader. I come from Cyril, with letters and messages to the brother Aufugus."

Pambo rose, and bowed reverentially.

"We have heard your good report, sir, as of one zealously affected in the cause of the Church Catholic. Will it please you to follow us to the cell of Aufugus?"

Peter stalked after them with a sufficiently important air to the little hut, and there taking from his bosom Cyril's epistle, handed it to Arsenius, who

sat long, reading and re-reading with a clouded brow, while Pambo watched him with simple awe, not daring to interrupt by a question lucubrations which he considered of unfathomable depth.

"These are indeed the last days," said Arsenius, at length, "spoken of by the prophet, when many shall run to and fro. So Heraclian has actually sailed for Italy?"

"His armament was met on the high seas by Alexandrian merchantmen, three weeks ago."

"And Orestes hardens his heart more and more?"

"Ay, Pharaoh that he is; or rather, the heathen woman hardens it for him."

"I always feared that woman above all the schools of the heathen," said Arsenius. "But the Count Heraclian, whom I always held for the wisest as well as the most righteous of men! Alas! — alas! what virtue will withstand, when ambition enters the heart?"

"Fearful, truly," said Peter, "is that same lust of power: but for him, I have never trusted him since he began to be indulgent to those Donatists."

"Too true. So does one sin beget another."

"And I consider that indulgence to sinners is the worst of all sins whatsoever."

"Not of all, surely, reverend sir?" said Pambo, humbly. But Peter, taking no notice of the interruption, went on to Arsenius —

"And now, what answer am I to bear back from your wisdom to his Holiness?"

"Let me see — let me see. He might — It needs consideration — I ought to know more of the state of parties. He has, of course, communicated with the African bishops, and tried to unite them with him!"

"Two months ago. But the stiff-necked schismatics are still jealous of him, and hold aloof."

"Schismatics is too harsh a term, my friend. But has he sent to Constantinople?"

"He needs a messenger accustomed to courts. It was possible, he thought, that your experience might undertake the mission."

"Me? Who am I? Alas! alas! fresh temptation daily! Let him send by the hand of whom he will..... And yet — were I — at least in Alexandria — I might advise from day to day .... I should certainly see my way clearer. .... And unforeseen chances might arise, too. .... Pambo, my friend, thinkest thou that it would be sinful to obey the Holy Patriarch!"

"Aha!" said Pambo, laughing, "and thou art he who was for fleeing into the desert an hour agone? And now when once thou smellest the battle afar off, thou art pawing in the valley, like the old war-horse. Go, and God be with thee! Thou wilt be none the worse for it. Thou art too old to fall in love, too poor to buy a bishopric, and too righteous to have one given thee."

"Art thou in earnest?"

"What did I say to thee in the garden? Go, and see our son, and send me news of him."

"Ah! shame on my worldly-mindedness! I had forgotten all this time to inquire for him. How is the youth, reverend sir?"

"Whom do you mean?"

"Philammon, our spiritual son, whom we sent down to you three months ago," said Pambo. "Risen to honour he is, by this time, I doubt not?"

"He? He is gone!"

"Gone?"

"Ay, the wretch, with the curse of Judas on him. He had not been with us three days before he beat me openly in the patriarch's court, cast off the Christian faith, and fled away to the heathen woman, Hypatia, of whom he is enamoured."

The two old men looked at each other with blank and horror-stricken faces.

"Enamoured of Hypatia?" said Arsenius, at last.

"It is impossible!" sobbed Pambo. "The boy must have been treated harshly, unjustly! Some one has wronged him; and he was accustomed only to kindness, and so could not bear it. Cruel men that you are, and unfaithful stewards! The Lord will require the child's blood at your hands!"

"Ay," said Peter, rising fiercely, "that is the world's justice! Blame me, blame the patriarch, blame any and every one but the sinner! As if a hot head and a hotter heart were not enough to explain it all! As if a young fool had never before been bewitched by a fair face!"

"Oh, my friends, my friends," cried Arsenius, "why revile each other without cause? I, I only am to blame. I advised you, Pambo! — I sent him — I ought to have known — what was I doing, old worldling that I am, to thrust the poor innocent forth into the temptations of Babylon? This comes of all my schemings and my plottings! And now his blood will be on my head — as if I had not sins enough to bear already, I must go and add this over and above all, to sell my own Joseph, the son of my old age, to the Midianites! Here, I will go with you — now — at

once — I will not rest till I find him, clasp hi
till he pities my grey hairs! Let Heraclian and
go their way for aught I care — I will fin
I say. O Absalom, my son! would God I h
for thee, my son! my son!"

CHAPTER XII.

The Bower of Acrasia.

THE house which Pelagia and the Amal had hired after their return to Alexandria, was one of the most splendid in the city. They had been now living there three months or more, and in that time Pelagia's taste had supplied the little which it needed to convert it into a paradise of lazy luxury. She herself was wealthy; and her Gothic guests, overburdened with Roman spoils, the very use of which they could not understand, freely allowed her and her nymphs to throw away for them the treasures which they had won in many a fearful fight. What matter? If they had enough to eat, and more than enough to drink, how could the useless surplus of their riches be better spent than in keeping their ladies in good humour? .... And when it was all gone .... they would go somewhere or other — who cared whither? — and win more. The whole world was before them waiting to be plundered, and they would fulfil their mission, whensoever it suited them. In the mean time they were in no hurry. Egypt furnished in profusion every sort of food which could gratify palates far more nice than theirs. And as for wine — few of them went to bed sober from one week's end to another. Could the souls of warriors have more, even in the halls of Valhalla?

So thought the party who occupied the inner court of the house, one blazing afternoon in the same week in which Cyril's messenger had so rudely broken in on the repose of the Scetis.

Their repose, at least, was still untouched. The great city roared without; Orestes plotted, and Cyril counterplotted, and the fate of a continent hung — or seemed to hang — trembling in the balance; but the turmoil of it all no more troubled those lazy Titans within, than did the roll and rattle of the carriage-wheels disturb the parakeets and sunbirds who peopled, under an awning of gilded wire, the inner court of Pelagia's house. Why should they fret themselves with it all? What was every fresh riot, execution, conspiracy, bankruptcy, but a sign — that the fruit was growing ripe for the plucking? Even Heraclian's rebellion, and Orestes' suspected conspiracy, were to the younger and coarser Goths a sort of child's play, at which they could look on, and laugh, and bet, from morning to night; while to the more cunning heads, such as Wulf and Smid, they were but signs of the general rottenness — new cracks in those great walls, over which they intended, with a simple and boyish consciousness of power, to mount to victory when they chose.

And in the mean time, till the right opening offered, what was there better than to eat, drink, and sleep? And certainly they had chosen a charming retreat in which to fulfil that lofty mission. Columns of purple and green porphyry, among which gleamed the white limbs of delicate statues, surrounded a basin of water, fed by a perpetual jet, which sprinkled with cool spray the leaves of the oranges and mimosas,

mingling its murmurs with the warblings of the tropic birds who nestled among the branches.

On one side of the fountain, under the shade of a broad-leaved palmetto, lay the Amal's mighty limbs, stretched out on cushions, his yellow hair crowned with vine-leaves, his hand grasping a golden cup, which had been won from Indian Rajahs by Parthian Chosroos, from Chosroos by Roman generals, from Roman generals by the heroes of sheepskin and horse-hide; while Pelagia, by the side of the sleepy Hercules-Dionysos, lay leaning over the brink of the fountain, lazily dipping her fingers into the water, and basking, like the gnats which hovered over its surface, in the mere pleasure of existence.

On the opposite brink of the basin, tended each by a dark-eyed Hebe, who filled the wine-cups, and helped now and then to empty them, lay the especial friends and companions in arms of the Amal, Goderic the son of Ermenric, and Agilmund the son of Cniva, who both, like the Amal, boasted a descent from gods; and last, but not least, that most important and all but sacred personage, Smid the son of Troll, reverenced for cunning beyond the sons of men; for not only could he make and mend all matters, from a pontoon bridge to a gold bracelet, shoe horses and doctor them, charm all diseases out of man and beast, carve runes, interpret war-omens, foretel weather, raise the winds, and, finally, conquer in the battle of mead-horns all except Wulf the son of Ovida; but he had actually, during a sojourn among the half civilized Mœsogoths, picked up a fair share of Latin and Greek, and a rough knowledge of reading and writing.

A few yards off lay old Wulf upon his back, his

knees in the air, his hands crossed behind his head, keeping up, even in his sleep, a half-conscious comment of growls on the following intellectual conversation: —

"Noble wine this, is it not?"

"Perfect. Who bought it for us?"

"Old Miriam bought it, at some great tax-farmer's sale. The fellow was bankrupt, and Miriam said she got it for the half what it was worth."

"Serve the penny-turning rascal right. The old vixen-fox took care, I'll warrant her, to get her profit out of the bargain."

"Never mind if she did. We can afford to pay like men, if we earn like men."

"We shan't afford it long, at this rate," growled Wulf.

"Then we'll go and earn more. I am tired of doing nothing."

"People need not do nothing, unless they choose," said Goderic. "Wulf and I had coursing fit for a king, the other morning, on the sand-hills. I had had no appetite for a week before, and I have been as sharp-set as a Danube pike ever since."

"Coursing? What, with those long-legged brush-tailed brutes, like a fox upon stilts, which the Prefect cozened you into buying?"

"All I can say is that we put up a herd of those — what do they call them here — deer with goat's horns?"

"Antelopes?"

"That's it — and the curs ran into them as a falcon does into a skein of ducks. Wulf and I galloped and galloped over those accursed sand-heaps till the

horses stuck fast; and when they got their wind again, we found each pair of dogs with a deer down between them — and what can man want more — if he cannot get fighting? You eat them, so you need not sneer."

"Well, dogs are the only things worth having, then, that this Alexandria does produce."

"Except fair ladies!" put in one of the girls.

"Of course. I'll except the women. But the men" —

"The what? I have not seen a man since I came here, except a dock-worker or two — priests and fine gentlemen they are all — and you don't call them men, surely?"

"What on earth do they do, beside riding donkeys?"

"Philosophize, they say."

"What's that?"

"I'm sure I don't know; some sort of slave's quill-driving, I suppose."

"Pelagia! do you know what philosophizing is?"

"No — and I don't care."

"I do," quoth Agilmund, with a look of superior wisdom; "I saw a philosopher the other day."

"And what sort of thing was it?"

"I'll tell you. I was walking down the great street, there, going to the harbour; and I saw a crowd of boys — men they call them here — going into a large doorway. So I asked one of them what was doing, and the fellow, instead of answering me, pointed at my legs, and set all the other monkeys laughing. So I boxed his ears, and he tumbled down."

"They all do so here, if you box their ears," said

the Amal, meditatively, as if he had hit upon a great inductive law.

"Ah," said Pelagia, looking up with her most winning smile, "they are not such giants as you, who make a poor little woman feel like a gazelle in the lion's paw!"

"Well — it struck me that, as I spoke in Gothic, the boy might not have understood me, being a Greek. So I walked in at the door, to save questions, and see for myself. And there a fellow held out his hand — I suppose for money. So I gave him two or three gold pieces, and a box on the ear, at which he tumbled down, of course, but seemed very well satisfied. So I walked in."

"And what did you see?"

"A great hall, large enough for a thousand heroes, full of these Egyptian rascals scribbling with pencils on tablets. And at the farther end of it the most beautiful woman I ever saw — with right fair hair and blue eyes, talking, talking — I could not understand it; but the donkey-riders seemed to think it very fine; for they went on looking first at her, and then at their tablets, gaping like frogs in drought. And, certainly, she looked as fair as the sun, and talked like an Alruna-wife. Not that I knew what I was about, but one can see somehow, you know. — So I fell asleep; and when I woke, and came out, I met some one who understood me, and he told me that it was the famous maiden, the great philosopher. And that's what I know about philosophy."

"She was very much wasted, then, on such soft-handed starvelings. Why don't she marry some hero?"

"Because there are none here to marry," said Pelagia; "except some who are fast netted, I fancy, already."

"But what do they talk about, and tell people to do, these philosophers, Pelagia?"

"Oh, they don't tell any one to do anything, — at least, if they do, nobody ever does it, as far as I can see; but they talk about suns and stars, and right and wrong, and ghosts and spirits, and that sort of thing; and about not enjoying oneself too much. Not that I ever saw that they were any happier than any one else."

"She must have been an Alruna-maiden," said Wulf, half to himself.

"She is a very conceited creature, and I hate her," said Pelagia.

"I believe you," said Wulf.

"What is an Alruna-maiden?" asked one of the girls.

"Something as like you as a salmon is like a horse-leech. Heroes, will you hear a saga?"

"If it is a cool one," said Agilmund; "about ice, and pine-trees, and snow-storms. I shall be roasted brown in three days more."

"Oh!" said the Amal, "that we were on the Alps again for only two hours, sliding down those snow-slopes on our shields, with the sleet whistling about our ears. That was sport!"

"To those who could keep their seat," said Goderic. "Who went head over heels into a glacier-crack, and was dug out of fifty feet of snow, and had to be put inside a fresh-killed horse before he could be brought to life?"

"Not you, surely," said Pelagia. "Oh, you wonderful creature! what things you have done and suffered!"

"Well," said Amal, with a look of stolid self-satisfaction, "I suppose I have seen a good deal in my time, eh?"

"Yes, my Hercules, you have gone through your twelve labours, and saved your poor little Hesione after them all, when she was chained to the rock, for the ugly sea-monsters to eat; and she will cherish you, and keep you out of scrapes now, for her own sake;" and Pelagia threw her arms round the great bull-neck, and drew it down to her.

"Will you hear my saga," said Wulf, impatiently.

"Of course we will," said the Amal; "anything to pass the time."

"But let it be about snow," said Agilmund.

"Not about Alruna wives?"

"About them, too," said Goderic; "my mother was one, so I must needs stand up for them."

"She was, boy. Do you be her son. Now hear, Wolves of the Goths!"

And the old man took up his little lute, or as he would probably have called it, "fidel," and began chanting, to his own accompaniment.

Over the camp fires
Drank I with heroes,
Under the Donau bank
Warm in the snow-trench,
Sagamen heard I there,
Men of the Longbeards,
Cunning and ancient,
Honey-sweet-voiced.
Scaring the wolf cub,
Scaring the horn-owl out,

Shaking the snow wreaths
Down from the pine boughs,
Up to the star-roof
Rang out their song.
Singing how Winil men,
Over the icefloes
Sledging from Scanland on
Came unto Scoring;
Singing of Gambara
Freya's beloved,
Mother of Ayo,
Mother of Ibor.
Singing of Wendel men,
Ambri and Assi;
How to the Winilfolk
Went they with war-words —
"Few are ye, strangers,
And many are we;
Pay us now toll and fee,
Clothyarn, and rings, and beeves;
Else at the raven's meal
Bide the sharp bill's doom."

Clutching the dwarfs' work then,
Clutching the bullock's shell,
Girding grey iron on,
Forth fared the Winils all,
Fared the Alruna's sons,
Ayo and Ibor.
Mad of heart stalked they:
Loud wept the women all,
Loud the Alruna-wife;
Sore was their need.

Out of the morning land,
Over the snowdrifts,
Beautiful Freya came,
Tripping to Scoring.
White were the moorlands,
And frozen before her;
But green were the moorlands,
And blooming behind her,
Out of her golden locks
Shaking the spring flowers,
Out of her garments
Shaking the south wind,

Around in the birches
Awaking the throstles,
And making chaste housewives all
Long for their heroes home.
Loving and love-giving,
Came she to Scoring.
Came unto Gambara,
Wisest of Valas —
"Vala, why weepest thou?
Far in the wide-blue,
High up in the Elfin-home
Heard I thy weeping."

"Stop not my weeping,
Till one can fight seven.
Sons have I, heroes tall,
First in the sword-play;
This day at the Wendels' hands
Eagles must tear them;
While their mothers, thrall-weary,
Must grind for the Wendels."

Wept the Alruna-wife;
Kissed her fair Freya —
"Far off in the morning land,
High in Valhalla,
A window stands open,
Its sill is the snow peaks,
Its posts are the water-spouts,
Storm rack its lintel,
Gold cloud-flakes above it,
Are piled for the roofing.
Far up to the Elfin-home,
High in the wide-blue.
Smiles out each morning thence
Odin Allfather;
From under the cloud-eaves,
Smiles out on the heroes,
Smiles out on chaste housewives all,
Smiles on the brood-mares,
Smiles on the smiths' work:
And theirs is the sword-luck,
With them is the glory.
So Odin hath sworn it —
Who first in the morning,
Shall meet him and greet him."

Still the Alruna wept —
"Who then shall greet him?
Women alone are here:
Far on the moorlands
Behind the war-lindens,
In vain for the bill's doom
Watch Winil heroes all,
One against seven."

Sweetly the Queen laughed —
"Hear thou my counsel now;
Take to thee cunning,
Beloved of Freya.
Take thou thy women-folk,
Maidens and wives:
Over your ankles
Lace on the white war-hose;
Over your bosoms
Link up the hard mailnets;
Over your lips
Plait long tresses with cunning; —
So war-beasts full-bearded
King Odin shall deem you,
When off the grey sea-beach
At sunrise ye greet him."

Night's son was driving
His golden-haired horses up;
Over the Eastern-firths
High flashed their manes.
Smiled from the cloud-eaves out
Allfather Odin,
Waiting the battle-sport:
Freya stood by him.

"Who are these heroes tall -
Lusty-limbed Longbeards?
Over the swans' bath
Why cry they to me?
Bones should be crashing fast,
Wolves should be full-fed,
Where'er such, mad-hearted,
Swing hands in the sword-play.

Sweetly laughed Freya —
"A name thou hast given them,

Shames neither thee nor them,
Well can they wear it.
Give them the victory,
First have they greeted thee;
Give them the victory,
Yokefellow mine!
Maidens and wives are these —
Wives of the Winils;
Few are their heroes
And far on the war-road,
So over the swans' bath
They cry unto thee."

Royally laughed he then;
Dear was that craft to him,
Odin Allfather,
Shaking the clouds.
"Cunning are women all,
Bold and importunate!
Longbeards their name shall be,
Ravens shall thank them:
Where the women are heroes,
What must the men be like?
Theirs is the victory;
No need of me!"*

"There!" said Wulf, when the song was ended, "is that cool enough for you?"

"Rather too cool; eh, Pelagia?" said the Amal laughing.

"Ay," went on the old man, bitterly enough, "such were your mothers; and such were your sisters; and such your wives must be, if you intend to last much longer on the face of the earth — women who care for something better than good eating, strong drinking, and soft lying."

* This punning legend may be seen in Paul Warnefrid's *Gesta Langobardorum*. Unfortunately, however, for the story, Lângbardr is said by the learned to have nothing to do with beards at all, but probably to mean "Longswords." The metre and language are intended as imitations of those of the earlier Eddaic poems.

"All very true, Prince Wulf," said Agilmund, "but I don't like the saga after all. It was a great deal too like what Pelagia here says those philosophers talk about — right and wrong, and that sort of thing."

"I don't doubt it."

"Now I like a really good saga, about gods and giants, and the fire kingdoms and the snow kingdoms, and the Æsir making men and women out of two sticks, and all that."

"Ay," said the Amal, "something like nothing one ever saw in one's life, all stark-mad and topsy-turvy, like one's dreams when one has been drunk; something grand which you cannot understand, but which sets you thinking over it all the morning after."

"Well," said Goderic, "my mother was an Alruna-woman, so I will not be the bird to foul its own nest. But I like to hear about wild beasts and ghosts, ogres, and fire-drakes, and nicors — something that one could kill if one had a chance, as one's fathers had."

"Your fathers would never have killed nicors," said Wulf, "if they had been —"

"Like us — I know," said the Amal. "Now tell me, Prince, you are old enough to be our father; and did you ever see a nicor?"

"My brother saw one, in the Northern sea, three fathoms long, with the body of a bison-bull, and the head of a cat, and the beard of a man, and tusks an ell long lying down on its breast, watching for the fishermen; and he struck it with an arrow, so that it fled to the bottom of the sea, and never came up again."

"What is a nicor, Agilmund!" asked one of the girls.

"A sea-devil who eats sailors. There used to be plenty of them where our fathers came from, and ogres too, who came out of the fens into the hall at night, when the warriors were sleeping, to suck their blood, and steal along, and steal along, and jump upon you — so!"

Pelagia, during the saga, had remained looking into the fountain, and playing with the water-drops, in assumed indifference. Perhaps it was to hide burning blushes, and something very like two hot tears, which fell unobserved into the ripple. Now she looked up suddenly —

"And of course you have killed some of these dreadful creatures, Amalric?"

"I never had such good luck, darling. Our forefathers were in such a hurry with them, that by the time we were born, there was hardly one left."

"Ay, they were men," growled Wulf.

"As for me," went on the Amal, "the biggest thing I ever killed was a snake in the Donau fens. How long was he, Prince? You had time to see, for you sat eating your dinner and looking on, while he was trying to crack my bones."

"Four fathom," answered Wulf.

"With a wild bull lying by him, which he had just killed. I spoilt his dinner, eh, Wulf?"

"Yes," said the old grumbler, mollified, "that was a right good fight."

"Why don't you make a saga about it, then, instead of about right and wrong, and such things?"

"Because I am turned philosopher. I shall go and hear that Alruna maiden this afternoon."

"Well said. Let us go, too, young men: it will pass the time, at all events."

"Oh no! no! no! do not! you shall not!" almost shrieked Pelagia.

"Why not, then, pretty one?"

"She is a witch — she — I will never love you again if you dare to go. Your only reason is that Agilmund's report of her beauty."

"So! You are afraid of my liking her golden locks better than your black ones?"

"I? Afraid?" And she leapt up, panting with pretty rage. "Come, we will go too — at once — and brave this nun, who fancies herself too wise to speak to a woman, and too pure to love a man! Look out my jewels! Saddle my white mule! We will go royally. We will not be ashamed of Cupid's livery, my girls — saffron shawl and all! Come, and let us see whether saucy Aphrodite is not a match after all for Pallas Athene and her owl!"

And she darted out of the cloister.

The three younger men burst into a roar of laughter, while Wulf looked with grim approval.

"So you want to go and hear the philosopher, Prince?" said Smid.

"Wheresoever a holy and a wise woman speaks, a warrior need not be ashamed of listening. Did not

Alaric bid us spare the nuns in Rome, comrade? And though I am no Christian, as he was, I thought it no shame for Odin's man to take their blessing; nor will I to take this one's, Smid, son of Troll."

CHAPTER XIII.

The Bottom of the Abyss.

"HERE am I, at last!" said Raphael Aben-Ezra to himself. "Fairly and safely landed at the very bottom of the bottomless; disporting myself on the firm floor of the primeval nothing, and finding my new element, like boys when they begin to swim, not so impracticable after all. No man, angel, or demon, can this day cast it in my teeth that I am weak enough to believe or disbelieve any phenomenon or theory in or concerning heaven or earth; or even that any such heaven, earth, phenomena, or theories exist — or otherwise. . . . . I trust that is a sufficiently exhaustive statement of my opinions? . . . . . I am certainly not dogmatic enough to deny — or to assert either — that there are sensations . . . . far too numerous for comfort . . . . but as for proceeding any further, by induction, deduction, analysis, or synthesis, I utterly decline the office of Arachne, and will spin no more cobwebs out of my own inside — if I have any. Sensations? What are they, but parts of oneself — if one has a self? What put this child's fancy into one's head, that there is anything outside of one which produces them? You have exactly similar ones in your dreams, and you know that there is no reality corresponding to them — No, you don't! How dare you be dogmatic enough to

affirm that? Why should not your dreams be as real as your waking thoughts? Why should not your dreams be the reality, and your waking thoughts the dream? What matter which?

"What matter, indeed? Here have I been staring for years — unless that, too, is a dream, which it very probably is — at every mountebank 'ism' which ever tumbled and capered on the philosophic tight-rope; and they are every one of them dead dolls, wooden, worked with wires, which are *petitiones principii*. . . . . Each philosopher begs the question in hand, and then marches forward, as brave as a triumph, and prides himself — on proving it all afterwards. No wonder that his theory fits the universe, when he has first clipped the universe to fit his theory. Have I not tried my hand at many a one — starting, too, no one can deny, with the very minimum of clipping, . . . for I suppose one cannot begin lower than at simple 'I am I' . . . . unless — which is equally demonstrable — at 'I am not I.' I recollect — or dream — that I offered that sweet dream, Hypatia, to deduce all things in Heaven and earth, from the Astronomics of Hipparchus to the number of plumes in an archangel's wing, from that one simple proposition, if she would but write me out a demonstration of it first, as some sort of *πού στώ* for the apex of my inverted pyramid. But she disdained . . . . people are apt to disdain what they know they cannot do . . . "It was an axiom," it was, "like one and one making two." . . . . How cross the sweet dream was, at my telling her that I did not consider that any axiom either, and that one thing and one thing seeming to us to be two things, was no more proof that they really were two, and not three hundred

and sixty-five, than a man's seeming to be an honest man proved him not to be a rogue; and at my asking her, moreover, when she appealed to universal experience, how she proved that the combined folly of all fools resulted in wisdom?

"'I am I' an axiom, indeed! What right have I to say that I am not any one else? How do I know it? How do I know that there is any one else for me not to be? I, or rather something, feels a number of sensations, longings, thoughts, fancies — the great devil take them all — fresh ones every moment, and each at war tooth and nail with all the rest; and then on the strength of this infinite multiplicity and contradiction, of which alone I am aware, I am to be illogical enough to stand up, and say, 'I by myself I;' and swear stoutly that I am one thing, when all I am conscious of is the devil only knows how many things. Of all quaint deductions from experience, that is the quaintest! Would it not be more philosophical to conclude that I, who never saw or felt or heard this which I call myself, am what I have seen, heard, and felt — and no more and no less — that sensation which I call that horse, that dead man, that jackass, those forty thousand two-legged jackasses who appear to be running for their lives below there, having got hold of this same notion of their being one thing each — as I choose to fancy in my foolish habit of imputing to them the same disease of thought which I find in myself — crucify the word! — The folly of my ancestors — if I ever had any — prevents my having any better expression. .... Why should I not be all I feel — that sky, those clouds — the whole universe? Hercules! what a creative genius my sensorium must be! — I'll take

to writing poetry — a mock-epic, in seventy-two books, entitled, 'The Universe; or, Raphael Aben-Ezra;' and take Homer's Margites for my model. Homer's? Mine! Why must not the Margites, like everything else, have been a sensation of my own? Hypatia used to say Homer's poetry was a part of her .... only she could not prove it .... but I have proved that the Margites is a part of me .... not that I believe my own proof — scepticism forbid! Oh, would to heaven that the said whole disagreeable universe were annihilated, if it were only just to settle by fair experiment whether any of master 'I' remained when they were gone! Buzzard and dogmatist! And how do you know that that would settle it? And if it did — why need it be settled? ....

"I dare say there is an answer pat for all this. I could write a pretty one myself in half an hour. But then I should not believe it .... nor the rejoinder to that .... nor the demurrer to that again .... So .... I am both sleepy and hungry .... or rather, sleepiness and hunger are me. Which is it? Heigh-ho ...." and Raphael finished his meditation by a mighty yawn.

This hopeful oration was delivered in a fitting lecture-room. Between the bare walls of a doleful fire-scarred tower in the Campagna of Rome, standing upon a knoll of dry brown grass, ringed with a few grim pines, blasted and black with smoke; there sat Raphael Aben-Ezra, working out the last formula of the great world-problem — "Given Self; to find God." Through the doorless stone archway he could see a long vista of the plain below, covered with broken trees, trampled crops, smoking villas, and all the ugly scars of recent

war, far onward to the quiet purple mountains and the silver sea, towards which struggled, far in the distance, long dark lines of moving specks, flowing together, breaking up, stopping short, recoiling back to surge forward by some fresh channel, while now and then a glitter of keen white sparks ran through the dense black masses .... The Count of Africa had thrown for the empire of the world — and lost.

"Brave old Sun!" said Raphael, "how merrily he flashes off the sword-blades yonder, and never cares that every tiny sparkle brings a death-shriek after it! Why should he? It is no concern of his. Astrologers are fools. His business is to shine; and on the whole, he is one of my few satisfactory sensations. How now? This is questionably pleasant!"

As he spoke, a column of troops came marching across the field, straight towards his retreat.

"If these new sensations of mine find me here, they will infallibly produce in me a new sensation, which will render all further ones impossible .... Well? What kinder thing could they do for me? ... Ay — but how do I know that they would do it? What possible proof is there that if a two-legged phantasm pokes a hard iron-grey phantasm in among my sensations, those sensations will be my last? Is the fact of my turning pale, and lying still, and being in a day or two converted into crow's flesh, any reason why I should not feel? And how do I know that would happen? I see it happen to certain sensations of my eyeball — or something else — who cares? which I call soldiers; but what possible analogy can there be between what seems to happen to those single sensations called soldiers, and what may or may not really

happen to all my sensations put together, which I call me? Should I bear apples if a phantasm seemed to come and plant me? Then why should I die if another phantasm seemed to come and poke me in the ribs?

"Still, I don't intend to deny it .... I am no dogmatist. Positively the phantasms are marching straight for my tower! Well, it may be safer to run away, on the chance. But as for losing feeling," continued he, rising, and cramming a few mouldy crusts into his wallet, "that, like everything else, is past proof. Why — if now, when I have some sort of excuse for fancying myself one thing in one place, I am driven mad with the number of my sensations, what will it be when I am eaten, and turned to dust, and undeniably many things in many places .... Will not the sensations be multiplied by — unbearable! I would swear at the thought, if I had anything to swear by! To be transmuted into the sensoria of forty different nasty carrion crows, besides two or three foxes, and a large black-beetle! I'll run away, just like anybody else .... if anybody existed. Come, Bran!"

* * * * *

"Bran! where are you; unlucky inseparable sensation of mine? Picking up a dinner already off these dead soldiers? Well, the pity is that this foolish contradictory taste of mine, while it makes me hungry, forbids me to follow your example. Why am I to take lessons from my soldier-phantasms, and not from my canine one? Illogical! Bran! Bran!" and he went out and whistled in vain for the dog.

"Bran! unhappy phantom, who will not vanish by night or day, lying on my chest even in dreams; and who would not even let me vanish, and solve the pro-

blem — though I don't believe there is any, why did you drag me out of the sea there at Ostia? Why did you not let me become a whole shoal of crabs? How did you know, or I either, that they may not be very jolly fellows, and not in the least troubled with philosophic doubts? .... But perhaps there were no crabs, but only phantasms of crabs..... And, on the other hand, if the crab-phantasms give jolly sensations, why should not the crow-phantasms? So which ever way it turns out, no matter; and I may as well wait here, and seem to become crows, as I certainly shall do. — Bran! .... Why should I wait for her? What pleasure can it be to me to have the feeling of a four-legged, brindled, lop-eared, toad-mouthed thing always between what seem to be my legs? There she is! Where have you been, madam? Don't you see I am in marching order, with staff and wallet ready shouldered? Come!"

But the dog, looking up in his face as only dogs can look, ran toward the back of the ruin, and up to him again, and back again, until he followed her.

"What's this? Here is a new sensation with a vengeance! Oh, storm and crowd of material appearances, were there not enough of you already, that you must add to your number these also? Bran! Bran! Could you find no other day in the year but this, whereon to present my ears with the squeals of — one — two — three — nine blind puppies?" ....

Bran answered by rushing into the hole where her new family lay tumbling and squalling, bringing out one in her mouth, and laying it at his feet.

"Needless, I assure you. I am perfectly aware of the state of the case already. What! another? Silly

old thing! — do you fancy, as the fine ladies do, that burdening the world with noisy likenesses of your precious self, is a thing of which to be proud? Why, she's bringing out the whole litter! . . . What was I thinking of last? Ah — the argument was self-contradictory, was it, because I could not argue without using the very terms which I repudiated. Well . . . And — why should it not be contradictory? Why not? One must face that too, after all. Why should not a thing be true, and false also? What harm in a thing's being false? What necessity for it to be true? True? What is truth? Why should a thing be the worse for being illogical? Why should there be any logic at all? Did I ever see a little beast flying about with 'Logic' labelled on its back? What do I know of it, but as a sensation of my own mind — if I have any? What proof is that that I am to obey it, and not it me? If a flea bites me, I get rid of that sensation; and if logic bothers me, I'll get rid of that too. Phantasms must be taught to vanish courteously. One's only hope of comfort lies in kicking feebly against the tyranny of one's own boring notions and sensations — every philosopher confesses that — and what god is logic, pray, that it is to be the sole exception? . . . What, old lady? I give you fair warning, you must choose this day, like any nun, between the ties of family and those of duty."

Bran seized him by the skirt, and pulled him down towards the puppies; took up one of the puppies and lifted it towards him; and then repeated the action with another.

"You unconscionable old brute; you don't actually

dare to expect me to carry your puppies for you?" and he turned to go.

Bran sat down on her tail, and began howling.

"Farewell, old dog! you have been a pleasant dream after all. . . . But if you will go the way of all phantasms" . . . And he walked away.

Bran ran with him, leaping and barking; then recollected her family and ran back; tried to bring them, one by one, in her mouth, and then to bring them all at once: and failing sat down and howled.

"Come, Bran! Come, old girl!"

She raced halfway up to him; then halfway back again to the puppies; then towards him again: and then suddenly gave it up, and dropping her tail, walked slowly back to the blind suppliants, with a deep reproachful growl.

"*****!" said Raphael, with a mighty oath; "you are right after all! Here are nine things come into the world; phantasms or not, there it is; I can't deny it. They are something, and you are something, old dog; or at least like enough to something to do instead of it; and you are not I, and as good as I, and they too, for aught I know, and have as good a right to live as I; and by the seven planets and all the rest of it, I'll carry them!"

And he went back, tied up the puppies in his blanket, and set forth, Bran barking, squeaking, wagging, leaping, running between his legs and upsetting him, in her agonies of joy.

"Forward! Whither you will, old lady! The world is wide. You shall be my guide, tutor, queen of philosophy, for the sake of this mere common sense of yours,

Forward, you new Hypatia! I promise you I will attend no lectures but yours this day!"

He toiled on, every now and then stepping across a dead body, or clambering a wall out of the road, to avoid some plunging, shrieking horse, or obscene knot of prowling camp followers, who were already stripping and plundering the slain. . . . . At last, in front of a large villa, now a black and smoking skeleton, he leaped a wall, and found himself landed on a heap of corpses. . . . They were piled up against the garden fence for many yards. The struggle had been fierce there some three hours before.

"Put me out of my misery! In mercy kill me!" moaned a voice beneath his feet.

Raphael looked down; the poor wretch was slashed and mutilated beyond all hope.

"Certainly, friend, if you wish it," and he drew his dagger. The poor fellow stretched out his throat, and awaited the stroke with a ghastly smile. Raphael caught his eye; his heart failed him, and he rose.

"What do you advise, Bran?" But the dog was far ahead, leaping and barking impatiently.

"I obey," said Raphael; and he followed her, while the wounded man called piteously and upbraidingly after him.

"He will not have long to wait. Those plunderers will not be as squeamish as I. . . . Strange, now! From Armenian reminiscences I should have fancied myself as free from such tender weakness as any of my Canaanite-slaying ancestors. . . . And yet by some mere spirit of contradiction, I couldn't kill that fellow, exactly because he asked me to do it. . . . There is more in that than will fit into the great inverted pyra-

mid of 'I am I.' . . . Never mind, let me get the dog's lessons by heart first. What next, Bran? Ah! Could one believe the transformation? Why this is the very trim villa which I passed yesterday morning, with the garden chairs standing among the flower-beds, just as the young ladies had left them, and the peacocks and silver pheasants running about, wondering why their pretty mistresses did not come to feed them. And here is a trampled mass of wreck and corruption for the girls to find, when they venture back from Rome, and complain how horrible war is for breaking down all their shrubs, and how cruel soldiers must be to kill and cook all their poor dear tame turtledoves! Why not? Why should they lament over other things — which they can just as little mend — and which perhaps need no more mending? Ah! there lies a gallant fellow underneath that fruit tree!"

Raphael walked up to a ring of dead, in the midst of which lay, half-sitting against the trunk of the tree, a tall and noble officer, in the first bloom of manhood. His casque and armour, gorgeously inlaid with gold, were hewn and battered by a hundred blows; his shield was cloven through and through; his sword broken in the stiffened hand which grasped it still. Cut off from his troop, he had made his last stand beneath the tree, knee-deep in the gay summer flowers, and there he lay, bestrewn, as if by some mockery — or pity — of mother nature, with faded roses, and golden fruit, shaken from off the boughs in that last deadly struggle. Raphael stood and watched him with a sad sneer.

"Well! — you have sold your fancied personality dear! How many dead men? . . . Nine . . . Eleven!

Conceited fellow! Who told you that your one life was worth the eleven which you have taken?"

Bran went up to the corpse — perhaps from its sitting posture fancying it still living — smelt the cold cheek, and recoiled with a mournful whine.

"Eh? That is the right way to look at the phenomenon, is it? Well, after all, I am sorry for you. . . . almost like you. . . . All your wounds in front, as a man's should be. Poor fop! Lais and Thais will never curl those dainty ringlets for you again! What is that bas-relief upon your shield? Venus receiving Psyche into the abode of the gods! . . . Ah! you have found out all about Psyche's wings by this time. . . . How do I know that? And yet, why am I, in spite of my common sense — if I have any — talking to you as you, and liking you, and pitying you, if you are nothing now, and probably never were anything? Bran! What right had you to pity him without giving your reasons in due form, as Hypatia would have done? Forgive me, sir, however — whether you exist or not, I cannot leave that collar round your neck for these camp-wolves to convert into strong liquor."

And as he spoke, he bent down, and detached, gently enough, a magnificent necklace.

"Not for myself, I assure you. Like Até's golden apple, it shall go to the fairest. Here, Bran!"

And he wreathed the jewels round the neck of the mastiff, who, evidently exalted in her own eyes by the burden, leaped and barked forward again, taking, apparently as a matter of course, the road back towards Ostia, by which they had come thither from the sea. And as he followed, careless where he went, he con-

tinued talking to himself aloud after the manner of restless self-discontented men.

. . . "And then man talks big about his dignity and his intellect, and his heavenly parentage, and his aspirations after the unseen and the beautiful, and the infinite — and everything else unlike himself. — How can he prove it? Why, these poor blackguards lying about are very fair specimens of humanity. — And how much have they been bothered since they were born with aspirations after anything infinite, except infinite sour wine? To eat, to drink; to destroy a certain number of their species; to reproduce a certain number of the same, two-thirds of whom will die in infancy, a dead waste of pain to their mothers, and of expense to their putative sires. . . . and then — what says Solomon? What befals them befals beasts. As one dies, so dies the other; so that they have all one breath, and a man has no pre-eminence over a beast; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are of the dust, and turn to dust again. Who knows that the breath of man goes upward, and that the breath of the beast goes downward to the earth? Who indeed, my most wise ancestor? Not I, certainly. Raphael Aben-Ezra, how art thou better than a beast? What pre-eminence hast thou, not merely over this dog, but over the fleas whom thou so wantonly cursest? Man must painfully win house, clothes, fire. . . . A pretty proof of his wisdom, when every flea has the wit to make my blanket, without any labour of his own, lodge him a great deal better than it lodges me! Man makes clothes, and the fleas live in them . . . Which is the wiser of the two? . . .

"Ah, but — man is fallen. . . . . Well — and the

flea is not. So much better he than the man; for he is what he was intended to be, and so fulfils the very definition of virtue . . . which no one can say of us of the red-ochre vein. And even if the old myth be true, and the man only fell, because he was set to do higher work than the flea — What does that prove — but that he could not do it?

"But his arts and his sciences? . . . Apage! The very sound of those grown-children's rattles turns me sick. . . . One conceited ass in a generation increasing labour and sorrow, and dying after all even as the fool dies, and ten million brutes and slaves, just where their forefathers were, and where their children will be after them, to the end of the farce. . . . The thing that has been, it is that which shall be; and there is no new thing under the sun. . . .

"And as for your palaces, and cities, and temples . . . look at this Campagna, and judge! Flea-bites go down after a while — and so do they. What are they but the bumps which we human fleas make in the old earth's skin? . . . Make them? We only cause them, as fleas cause flea-bites. . . . What are all the works of man, but a sort of cutaneous disorder in this unhealthy earth-hide, and we a race of larger fleas, running about among its fur, which we call trees? Why should not the earth be an animal? How do I know it is not? Because it is too big? Bah! What is big, and what is little? Because it has not the shape of one? . . . Look into a fisherman's net, and see what forms are there! Because it does not speak? . . . Perhaps it has nothing to say, being too busy. Perhaps it can talk no more sense than we. . . . In both cases it shows its wisdom by holding its tongue. Because

it moves in one necessary direction? . . . How do I know that it does? How can I tell that it is not flirting with all the seven spheres at once, at this moment? But if it does — so much the wiser of it, if that be the best direction for it. Oh, what a base satire on ourselves and our notions of the fair and fitting, to say that a thing cannot be alive and rational, just because it goes steadily on upon its own road, instead of skipping and scrambling fantastically up and down without method or order, like us and the fleas, from the cradle to the grave! Besides, if you grant, with the rest of the world, that fleas are less noble than we, because they are our parasites, then you are bound to grant that we are less noble than the earth, because we are its parasites. . . . Positively, it looks more probable than anything I have seen for many a day. . . . And, by-the-by, why should not earthquakes and floods, and pestilences, be only just so many ways which the cunning old brute earth has of scratching herself, when the human fleas and their palace and city bites get too troublesome?"

At a turn of the road he was aroused from this profitable meditation by a shriek, the shrillness of which told him that it was a woman's. He looked up, and saw close to him, among the smouldering ruins of a farm-house, two ruffians driving before them a young girl, with her hands tied behind her, while the poor creature was looking back piteously after something among the ruins, and struggling in vain, bound as she was, to escape from her captors, and return.

"Conduct unjustifiable in any fleas, — eh, Bran? How do I know that, though? Why should it not be a piece of excellent fortune for her, if she had but the

equanimity to see it? Why — what will happen to her? She will be taken to Rome, and sold as a slave. . . . And in spite of a few discomforts in the transfer, and the prejudice which some persons have against standing an hour on the catasta to be handled from head to foot in the minimum of clothing, she will must probably end in being far better housed, fed, bedizened, and pampered to her heart's desire, than ninety-nine out of a hundred of her sister-fleas . . . till she begins to grow old . . . which she must do in any case. . . . And if she have not contrived to wheedle her master out of her liberty, and to make up a pretty little purse of savings, by that time — why, it is her own fault. Eh, Bran?"

But Bran by no means agreed with his view of the case; for after watching the two ruffians, with her head stuck on one side, for a minute or two, she suddenly and silently, after the manner of mastiffs, sprang upon them, and dragged one to the ground.

"Oh! that is the 'fit and beautiful,' in this case, as they say in Alexandria, is it? Well — I obey. You are at least a more practical teacher than ever Hypatia was. Heaven grant that there may be no more of them in the ruins!"

And rushing on the second plunderer, he laid him dead with a blow of his dagger, and then turned to the first, whom Bran was holding down by the throat.

"Mercy, mercy!" shrieked the wretch. "Life! only life!"

"There was a fellow half-a-mile back begging me to kill him: with which of you two am I to agree? — for you can't both be right."

"Life! Only life!"

"A carnal appetite, which man must learn to conquer," said Raphael, as he raised the poniard. . . . In a moment it was over, and Bran and he rose. — Where was the girl? She had rushed back to the ruins, whither Raphael followed her; while Bran ran to the puppies, which he had laid upon a stone, and commenced her maternal cares.

"What do you want, my poor girl?" asked he, in Latin. "I will not hurt you."

"My father! My father!"

He untied her bruised and swollen wrists; and without stopping to thank him, she ran to a heap of fallen stones and beams, and began digging wildly with all her little strength, breathlessly calling "Father!"

"Such is the gratitude of flea to flea! What is there, now, in the mere fact of being accustomed to call another person father, and not master, or slave, which should produce such passion as that? . . . Brute habit! . . . What services can the said man render, or have rendered, which make him worth — Here is Bran! . . . What do you think of that, my female philosopher?"

Bran sat down and watched too. The poor girl's tender hands were bleeding from the stones, while her golden tresses rolled down over her eyes, and entangled in her impatient fingers: but still she worked frantically. Bran seemed suddenly to comprehend the case, rushed to the rescue, and began digging too, with all her might.

Raphael rose with a shrug, and joined in the work.

* * * * *

"Hang these brute instincts! They make one very hot. What was that?"

A feeble moan rose from under the stones. A human limb was uncovered. The girl threw herself on the place, shrieking her father's name. Raphael put her gently back, and exerting his whole strength, drew out of the ruins a stalwart elderly man, in the dress of an officer of high rank.

He still breathed. The girl lifted up his head and covered him with wild kisses. Raphael looked round for water; found a spring and a broken sherd, and bathed the wounded man's temples till he opened his eyes, and showed signs of returning life.

The girl still sat by him, fondling her recovered treasure, and bathing the grizzled face in holy tears.

"It is no business of mine," said Raphael. "Come, Bran!"

The girl sprang up, threw herself at his feet, kissed his hands, called him her saviour, her deliverer, sent by God.

"Not in the least, my child. You must thank my teacher the dog, not me."

And she took him at his word, and threw her soft arms round Bran's neck; and Bran understood it, and wagged her tail, and licked the gentle face lovingly.

"Intolerably absurd, all this!" said Raphael. "I must be going, Bran."

"You will not leave us? You surely will not leave an old man to die here?"

"Why not? What better thing could happen to him?"

"Nothing," murmured the officer, who had not spoken before.

"Ah God! he is my father!"

"Well?"

"He is my father!"

"Well?"

"You must save him! You shall, I say!" And she seized Raphael's arm in the imperiousness of her passion.

He shrugged his shoulders; but felt, he knew not why, marvellously inclined to obey her.

"I may as well do this as anything else, having nothing else to do. Whither now, sir?"

"Whither you will. Our troops are disgraced, our eagles taken. We are your prisoners by right of war. We follow you."

"Oh my fortune! A new responsibility! Why cannot I stir, without live animals, from fleas upward, attaching themselves to me? Is it not enough to have nine blind puppies at my back, and an old brute at my heels, who will persist in saving my life, that I must be burdened over and above with a respectable elderly rebel and his daughter? Why am I not allowed by fate to care for nobody but myself? Sir, I give you both your freedom. The world is wide enough for us all. I really ask no ransom."

"You seem philosophically disposed, my friend."

"I? Heaven forbid! I have gone right through that slough, and come out sheer on the other side. For sweeping the last lingering taint of it out of me, I have to thank, not sulphur and exorcisms, but your soldiers and their morning's work. Philosophy is superfluous in a world where all are fools."

"Do you include yourself under that title?"

"Most certainly, my best sir. Don't fancy that I make any exceptions. If I can in any way prove my folly to you, I will do it.'

"Then help me and my daughter to Ostia."

"A very fair instance. Well — my dog happens to be going that way; and, after all, you seem to have a sufficient share of human imbecility to be a very fit companion for me. I hope, though, you do not set up for a wise man?"

"God knows — no! Am I not of Heraclian's army?"

"True; and the young lady, here, made herself so great a fool about you, that she actually infected the very dog."

"So we three fools will forth together."

"And the greatest one, as usual, must help the rest. But I have nine puppies in my family already. How am I to carry you and them?"

"I will take them," said the girl; and Bran, after looking on at the transfer with a somewhat dubious face, seemed to satisfy herself that all was right, and put her head contentedly under the girl's hand.

"Eh? You trust her, Bran?" said Raphael, in an undertone. "I must really emancipate myself from your instructions if you require a similar simplicity in me. Stay! there wanders a mule without a rider; we may as well press him into the service."

He caught the mule, lifted the wounded man into the saddle, and the cavalcade set forth, turning out of the high-road into a by-lane, which the officer, who seemed to know the country thoroughly, assured

him would lead them to Ostia by an unfrequented route.

"If we arrive there before sundown, we are saved," said he.

"And in the mean time," answered Raphael, "between the dog and this dagger, which, as I take care to inform all comers, is delicately poisoned, we may keep ourselves clear of marauders. And yet what a meddling fool I am!" he went on to himself. "What possible interest can I have in this uncircumcised rebel? The least evil is, that if we are taken, which we most probably shall be, I shall be crucified for helping him to escape. But even if we get safe off — here is a fresh tie between me and those very brother fleas, to be rid of whom I have chosen beggary and starvation. Who knows where it may end? Pooh! The man is like other men. He is certain, before the day is over, to prove ungrateful, or attempt the mountebank-heroic, or give me some other excuse for bidding him good evening. And in the mean time, there is something quaint in the fact of finding so sober a respectability, with a young daughter too, abroad on this fool's errand, which really makes me curious to discover with what variety of flea I am to class him."

But while Aben-Ezra was talking to himself about the father, he could not help, somehow, thinking about the daughter. Again and again he found himself looking at her. She was, undeniably, most beautiful. Her features were not as regularly perfect as Hypatia's, nor her stature so commanding; but her face shone with a clear and joyful determination, and with a tender and modest thoughtfulness, such as he had

never beheld before united in one countenance; and as she stepped along, firmly and lightly, by her father's side, looping up her scattered tresses as she went, laughing at the struggles of her noisy burden, and looking up with rapture at her father's gradually brightening face, Raphael could not help stealing glance after glance, and was surprised to find them returned with a bright, honest, smiling gratitude, which met him full-eyed, as free from prudery as it was from coquetry. . . . "A lady she is," said he to himself; "but evidently no city one. There is nature — or something else, there, pure and unadulterated, without any of man's additions or beautifications." And as he looked he began to feel it a pleasure, such as his weary heart had not known for many a year, simply to watch her. . .

"Positively there is a foolish enjoyment after all in making other fleas smile. . . . Ass that I am! As if I had not drank all that ditch-water cup to the dregs years ago!"

They went on for some time in silence, till the officer, turning to him —

"And may I ask you, my quaint preserver, whom I would have thanked before but for this foolish faintness, which is now going off, what and who you are?"

"A flea, sir — a flea — nothing more."

"But a patrician flea, surely; to judge by your language and manners?"

"Not that exactly. True, I have been rich, as the saying is; I may be rich again, they tell me, when I am fool enough to choose."

"Oh if we were but rich!" sighed the girl.

"You would be very unhappy, my dear young lady. Believe a flea who has tried the experiment thoroughly."

"Ah! but we could ransom my brother! and now we can find no money till we get back to Africa."

"And none then," said the officer, in a low voice. "You forget, my poor child, that I mortgaged the whole estate to raise my legion. We must not shrink from looking at things as they are."

"Ah! and he is prisoner! he will be sold for a slave — perhaps — ah! perhaps crucified, for he is not a Roman! Oh, he will be crucified!" and she burst into an agony of weeping. . . . Suddenly she dashed away her tears and looked up clear and bright once more. "No! forgive me, father! God will protect his own!"

"My dear young lady," said Raphael, "if you really dislike such a prospect for your brother, and are in want of a few dirty coins wherewith to prevent it, perhaps I may be able to find you them in Ostia."

She looked at him incredulously, as her eye glanced over his rags, and then, blushing, begged his pardon for her unspoken thoughts.

"Well — as you choose to suppose. But my dog has been so civil to you already, that perhaps she may have no objection to make you a present of that necklace of hers. I will go to the Rabbis, and we will make all right; so don't cry. I hate crying; and the puppies are quite chorus enough for the present tragedy."

"The Rabbis? Are you a Jew?" asked the officer.

"Yes, sir, a Jew. And you, I presume, a Christian: perhaps you may have scruples about receiving — your sect has generally none about taking — from

one of our stubborn and unbelieving race. Don't be frightened, though, for your conscience; I assure you I am no more a Jew at heart than I am a Christian."

"God help you, then!"

"Some one, or something, has helped me a great deal too much, for three-and-thirty years of pampering. But, pardon me, that was a strange speech for a Christian."

"You must be a good Jew, sir, before you can be a good Christian."

"Possibly. I intend to be neither — nor a good Pagan either. My dear sir, let us drop the subject. It is beyond me. If I can be as good a brute animal as my dog there — it being first demonstrated that it is good to be good — I shall be very well content."

The officer looked down on him with a stately, loving sorrow. Raphael caught his eye, and felt that he was in the presence of no common man.

"I must take care what I say here, I suspect, or I shall be entangled shortly in a regular Socratic dialogue . . . And now, sir, may I return your question, and ask who and what are you? I really have no intention of giving you up to any Cæsar, Antiochus, Tiglath-Pileser, or other flea-devouring flea . . . They will fatten well enough without your blood. So I only ask as a student of the great nothing-in-general, which men call the universe."

"I was prefect of a legion this morning. What I am now, you know as well as I."

"Just what I do not. I am in deep wonder at seeing your hilarity, when, by all flea-analogies, you ought to be either behowling your fate like Achilles on the shores of Styx, or pretending to grin and bear it,

as I was taught to do when I played at Stoicism. You are not of that sect certainly, for you confessed yourself a fool just now."

"And it would be long, would it not, before you made one of them do as much? Well, be it so. A fool I am; yet, if God helps us as far as Ostia, why should I not be cheerful?"

"Why should you?"

"What better thing can happen to a fool, than that God should teach him that he is one, when he fancied himself the wisest of the wise? Listen to me, sir. Four months ago I was blessed with health, honour, lands, friends — all for which the heart of man could wish And if, for an insane ambition, I have chosen to risk all those, against the solemn warnings of the truest friend, and the wisest saint, who treads this earth of God's — should I not rejoice to have it proved to me, even by such a lesson as this, that the friend who never deceived me before was right in this case too; and that the God who has checked and turned me for forty years of wild toil and warfare, whenever I dared to do what was right in the sight of my own eyes, has not forgotten me yet, or given up the thankless task of my education?"

"And who, pray, is this peerless friend?"

"Augustine of Hippo."

"Humph! It had been better for the world in general, if the great dialectician had exerted his powers of persuasion on Heraclian himself."

"He did so, but in vain."

"I don't doubt it. I know the sleek Count well enough to judge what effect a sermon would have upon that smooth vulpine determination of his. . . . 'An in-

strument in the hands of God, my dear brother. . . We must obey His call, even to the death, &c. &c.'" And Raphael laughed bitterly.

"You know the Count?"

"As well, sir, as I care to know any man."

"I am sorry for your eyesight, then, sir," said the Prefect, severely, "if it has been able to discern no more than that in so august a character."

"My dear sir, I do not doubt his excellence — nay, his inspiration. How well he divined the perfectly fit moment for stabbing his old comrade Stilicho! But really, as two men of the world, we must be aware by this time that every man has his price." . . .

"Oh, hush! hush!" whispered the girl. "You cannot guess how you pain him. He worships the Count. It was not ambition, as he pretends, but mere loyalty to him, which brought him here against his will."

"My dear madam, forgive me. For your sake I am silent." . . .

"For her sake! A pretty speech for me! What next?" said he to himself. "Ah, Bran, Bran, this is all your fault!"

"For my sake? Oh, why not for your own sake? How sad to hear one — one like you, only sneering and speaking evil!"

"Why then? If fools are fools, and one can safely call them so, why not do it?"

"Ah — if God was merciful enough to send down his own Son to die for them, should we not be merciful enough not to judge their failings harshly?"

"My dear young lady, spare a worn-out philosopher any new anthropologic theories. We really must push on a little faster, if we intend to reach Ostia to-night."

But, for some reason or other, Raphael sneered no more for a full half-hour.

Long, however, ere they reached Ostia, the night had fallen; and their situation began to be more than questionably safe. Now and then a wolf, slinking across the road toward his ghastly feast, glided like a lank ghost out of the darkness, and into it again, answering Bran's growl by a gleam of his white teeth. Then the voices of some marauding party rang coarse and loud through the still night, and made them hesitate and stop a while. And at last, worst of all, the measured tramp of an imperial column began to roll like distant thunder along the plain below. They were advancing upon Ostia! What if they arrived there before the routed army could rally, and defend themselves long enough to re-embark? . . . What if — a thousand ugly possibilities began to crowd up.

"Suppose we found the gates of Ostia shut, and the Imperialists bivouacked outside?" said Raphael, half to himself.

"God would protect his own," answered the girl; and Raphael had no heart to rob her of her hope, though he looked upon their chances of escape as growing smaller and smaller every moment. The poor girl was weary; the mule weary also; and as they crawled along, at a pace which made it certain that the fast passing column would be at Ostia an hour before them, to join the vanguard of the pursuers, and aid them in investing the town, she had to lean again and again on Raphael's arm. Her shoes, unfitted for so rough a journey, had been long since torn off, and her tender feet were marking every step with blood. Raphael knew it by her faltering gait; and remarked, too, that

neither sigh nor murmur passed her lips. But as for helping her, he could not; and began to curse the fancy which had led him to eschew even sandals as unworthy the self-dependence of a Cynic.

And so they crawled along, while Raphael and the Prefect, each guessing the terrible thoughts of the other, were thankful for the darkness which hid their despairing countenances from the young girl; she, on the other hand, chatting cheerfully, almost laughingly, to her silent father.

At last the poor child stepped on some stone more sharp than usual — and with a sudden writhe and shriek, sank to the ground. Raphael lifted her up, and she tried to proceed, but sank down again. . . . What was to be done?

"I expected this," said the Prefect, in a slow stately voice. "Hear me, sir! Jew, Christian, or philosopher, God seems to have bestowed on you a heart which I can trust. To your care I commit this girl — your property, like me, by right of war. Mount her upon this mule. Hasten with her — where you will — for God will be there also. And may He so deal with you, as you deal with her henceforth. An old and disgraced soldier can do no more than die."

And he made an effort to dismount; but fainting from his wounds, sank upon the neck of the mule. Raphael and his daughter caught him in their arms.

"Father! Father! Impossible! Cruel! Oh — do you think that I would have followed you hither from Africa, against your own entreaties, to desert you now?"

"My daughter, I command!"

The girl remained firm and silent.

"How long have you learned to disobey me? Lift

the old disgraced man down, sir, and leave him to die in the right place — on the battle-field where his general set him."

The girl sunk down on the road in an agony of weeping. "I must help myself, I see," said her father, dropping to the ground. "Authority vanishes before old age and humiliation. Victoria! Has your father no sins to answer for already, that you will send him before his God with your blood too upon his head?"

Still the girl sat weeping on the ground; while Raphael, utterly at his wits' end, tried hard to persuade himself that it was no concern of his.

"I am at the service of either or of both, for life or death, only be so good as to settle it quickly .... Hell! here it is settled for us, with a vengeance!"

And as he spoke, the tramp and jingle of horsemen rang along the lane, approaching rapidly.

In an instant Victoria had sprung to her feet — weakness and pain had vanished.

"There is one chance — one chance for him! Lift him over the bank, sir! Lift him over, while I run forward and meet them. My death will delay them long enough for you to save him!"

"Death?" cried Raphael, seizing her by the arm. "If that were all —"

"God will protect his own," answered she, calmly, laying her finger on her lips; and then breaking from his grasp in the strength of her heroism, vanished into the night.

Her father tried to follow her, but fell on his face, groaning. Raphael lifted him, strove to drag him up the steep bank: but his knees knocked together; a faint sweat seemed to melt every limb .... There was a

pause, which seemed ages long .... Nearer and nearer came the trampling .... A sudden gleam of the moon revealed Victoria standing with outspread arms, right before the horses' heads. A heavenly glory seemed to bathe her from head to foot .... or was it tears sparkling in his own eyes? .... Then the grate and jar of the horse-hoofs on the road, as they pulled up suddenly .... He turned his face away and shut his eyes ....

"What are you?" thundered a voice.

"Victoria, the daughter of Majoricus the Prefect"

The voice was low, but yet so clear and calm, that every syllable rang through Aben-Ezra's tingling ears...

A shout — a shriek — the confused murmur of many voices .... he looked up, in spite of himself — a horseman had sprung to the ground, and clasped Victoria in his arms. The human heart of flesh, asleep for many a year, leaped into mad life within his breast, and drawing his dagger, he rushed into the throng —

"Villains! Hellhounds! I will balk you! She shall die first!"

And the bright blade gleamed over Victoria's head .... He was struck down — blinded — half-stunned — but rose again with the energy of madness .... What was this? Soft arms around him .... Victoria's!

"Save him! spare him! He saved us! Sir! It is my brother! We are safe! Oh, spare the dog! It saved my father!"

"We have mistaken each other, indeed, sir!" said a young Tribune, in a voice trembling with joy. "Where is my father?"

"Fifty yards behind. Down, Bran! Quiet! Oh Solomon mine ancestor, why did you not prevent me

making such an egregious fool of myself? Why, I shall be forced, in self-justification, to carry through the farce!"

There is no use telling what followed during the next five minutes, at the end of which time Raphael found himself astride of a goodly war-horse, by the side of the young Tribune, who carried Victoria before him. Two soldiers in the mean time were supporting the Prefect on his mule, and convincing that stubborn bearer of burdens that it was not quite so unable to trot as it had fancied, by the combined arguments of a drench of wine and two sword-points, while they heaped their general with blessings, and kissed his hands and feet.

"Your father's soldiers seem to consider themselves in debt to him: not, surely, for taking them where they could best run away?"

"Ah, poor fellows!" said the Tribune; "we have had as real a panic among us as I ever read of in Arrian or Polybius. But he has been a father rather than a general to them. It is not often that, out of a routed army, twenty gallant men will volunteer to ride back into the enemy's ranks, on the chance of an old man's breathing still."

"Then you knew where to find us?" said Victoria.

"Some of them knew. And he himself showed us this very by-road yesterday, when we took up our ground, and told us it might be of service on occasion — and so it has been."

"But they told me that you were taken prisoner. Oh, the torture I have suffered for you!"

"Silly child! Did you fancy my father's son would be taken alive? I and the first troop got away over

the garden walls; and cut our way out into the plain, three hours ago."

"Did I not tell you," said Victoria, leaning toward Raphael, "that God would protect his own?"

"You did," answered he; and fell into a long and silent meditation.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Rocks of the Sirens.

THESE four months had been busy and eventful enough to Hypatia and to Philammon; yet the events and the business were of so gradual and uniform a tenour, that it is as well to pass quickly over them, and show what had happened principally by its effects.

The robust and fiery desert-lad was now metamorphosed into the pale and thoughtful student, oppressed with the weight of careful thought and weary memory. But those remembrances were all recent ones. With his entrance into Hypatia's lecture-room, and into the fair realms of Greek thought, a new life had begun for him; and the Laura, and Pambo, and Arsenius, seemed dim phantoms from some antenatal existence, which faded day by day before the inrush of new and startling knowledge.

But though the friends and scenes of his childhood had fallen back so swiftly into the far horizon, he was not lonely. His heart found a lovelier, if not a healthier home, than it had ever known before. For during those four peaceful and busy months of study there had sprung up between Hypatia and the beautiful boy one of those pure and yet passionate friendships — call them rather, with St. Augustine, by the sacred name of love — which, fair and holy as they are

when they link youth to youth, or girl to girl, reach their full perfection only between man and woman. The unselfish adoration with which a maiden may bow down before some strong and holy priest, or with which an enthusiastic boy may cling to the wise and tender matron, who, amid the turmoil of the world, and the pride of beauty, and the cares of wifehood, bends down to him with counsel and encouragement — earth knows no fairer bonds than these, save wedded love itself. And that second relation, motherly rather than sisterly, had bound Philammon with a golden chain to the wondrous maid of Alexandria.

From the commencement of his attendance in her lecture-room she had suited her discourses to what she fancied were his especial spiritual needs; and many a glance of the eye towards him, on any peculiarly important sentence, set the poor boy's heart beating at that sign that the words were meant for him. But before a month was past, won by the intense attention with which he watched for every utterance of hers, she had persuaded her father to give him a place in the library as one of his pupils, among the youths who were employed there daily in transcribing, as well as in studying, the authors then in fashion.

She saw him at first but seldom — more seldom than she would have wished: but she dreaded the tongue of scandal, heathen as well as Christian, and contented herself with inquiring daily from her father about the progress of the boy. And when at times she entered for a moment the library, where he sat writing, or passed him on her way to the Museum, a look was interchanged, on her part of most gracious approval, and on his of adoring gratitude, which was

enough for both. Her spell was working surely; and she was too confident in her own cause and her own powers to wish to hurry that transformation for which she so fondly hoped.

"He must begin at the beginning," thought she to herself. "Mathematics and the Parmenides are enough for him as yet. Without a training in the liberal sciences he cannot gain a faith worthy of those gods, to whom some day I shall present him; and I should find his Christian ignorance and fanaticism transferred, whole and rude, to the service of those gods whose shrine is unapproachable save to the spiritual man, who has passed through the successive vestibules of science and philosophy."

But soon, attracted herself, as much as wishing to attract him, she employed him in copying manuscripts for her own use. She sent back his themes and declamations, corrected with her own hand; and Philammon laid them by in his little garret at Eudæmon's house as precious badges of honour, after exhibiting them to the reverential and envious gaze of the little porter. So he toiled on, early and late, counting himself well paid for a week's intense exertion by a single smile, or word of approbation, and went home to pour out his soul to his host on the one inexhaustible theme which they had in common — Hypatia and her perfections. He would have raved often enough on the same subject to his fellow-pupils, but he shrank not only from their artificial city manners, but also from their morality, for suspecting which he saw but too good cause. He longed to go out into the streets, to proclaim to the whole world the treasure which he had found, and call on all to come

and share it with him. For there was no jealousy in that pure love of his. Could he have seen her lavishing on thousands far greater favours than she had conferred on him, he would have rejoiced in the thought that there were so many more blest beings upon earth, and have loved them all and every one as brothers, for having deserved her notice. Her very beauty, when his first flush of wonder was past, he ceased to mention — ceased even to think of it. Of course she must be beautiful. It was her right; the natural complement of her other graces: but it was to him only what the mother's smile is to the infant, the sunlight to the skylark, the mountain-breeze to the hunter — an inspiring element, on which he fed unconsciously. Only when he doubted for a moment some especially startling or fanciful assertion, did he become really aware of the great loveliness of her who made it; and then his heart silenced his judgment with the thought — Could any but true words come out of those perfect lips? — any but royal thoughts take shape within that queenly head? . . . . Poor fool! Yet was it not natural enough?

Then, gradually, as she passed the boy, poring over his book in some alcove of the Museum gardens, she would invite him by a glance to join the knot of loungers and questioners who dangled about her and her father, and fancied themselves to be reproducing the days of the Athenian sages amid the groves of another Academus. Sometimes, even, she had beckoned him to her side as she sat in some retired arbour, attended only by her father; and there some passing observation, earnest and personal, however lofty and measured, made him aware, as it was intended to do,

that she had a deeper interest in him, a livelier sympathy for him, than for the many; that he was in her eyes not merely a pupil to be instructed, but a soul whom she desired to educate. And those delicious gleams of sunlight grew more frequent and more protracted; for by each she satisfied herself more and more that she had not mistaken either his powers or his susceptibilities; and in each, whether in public or private, Philammon seemed to bear himself more worthily. For over and above the natural ease and dignity which accompanies physical beauty, and the modesty, self-restraint, and deep earnestness, which he had acquired under the discipline of the Laura, his Greek character was developing itself in all its quickness, subtlety, and versatility, until he seemed to Hypatia some young Titan, by the side of the flippant, hasty, and insincere talkers who made up her chosen circle.

But man can no more live upon Platonic love, than on the more prolific species of that common ailment; and for the first month Philammon would have gone hungry to his couch full many a night, to lie awake from baser causes than philosophic meditation, had it not been for his magnanimous host, who never lost heart for a moment, either about himself, or any other human being. As for Philammon's going out with him to earn his bread, he would not hear of it. Did he suppose that he could meet any of those monkish rascals in the street, without being knocked down and carried off by main force? And beside, there was a sort of impiety in allowing so hopeful a student to neglect the "Divine Ineffable" in order to supply the base necessities of the teeth. So he should pay no rent for

his lodgings — positively none; and as for eatables — why, he must himself work a little harder in order to cater for both. Had not all his neighbours their litters of children to provide for, while he, thanks to the immortals, had been far too wise to burden the earth with animals who would add to the ugliness of their father the Tartarean hue of their mother? And after all, Philammon could pay him back when he became a great sophist, and made money, as of course he would some day or other; and in the mean time, something might turn up — things were always turning up for those whom the gods favoured; and besides, he had fully ascertained that on the day on which he first met Philammon, the planets were favourable, the Mercury being in something or other, he forgot what, with Helios, which portended for Philammon, in his opinion, a similar career with that of the glorious and devout Emperor Julian.

Philammon winced somewhat at the hint; which seemed to have an ugly verisimilitude in it: but still, philosophy he must learn, and bread he must eat; so he submitted.

But one evening, a few days after he had been admitted as Theon's pupil, he found, much to his astonishment, lying on the table in his garret, an undeniable glittering gold piece. He took it down to the porter the next morning, and begged him to discover the owner of the lost coin, and return it duly. But what was his surprise, when the little man, amid endless capers and gesticulations, informed him, with an air of mystery, that it was anything but lost; that his arrears of rent had been paid for him; and that, by the bounty of the upper powers, a fresh piece of

coin would be forthcoming every month. In vain Philammon demanded to know who was his benefactor. Eudæmon resolutely kept the secret, and imprecated a whole Tartarus of unnecessary curses on his wife if she allowed her female garrulity — though the poor creature seemed never to open her lips from morning till night — to betray so great a mystery.

Who was the unknown friend? There was but one person who could have done it. . . . And yet he dared not — the thought was too delightful — think that it was she. It must have been her father. The old man had asked him more than once about the state of his purse. True, he had always returned evasive answers; but the kind old man must have divined the truth. Ought he not — must he not — go and thank him? No; perhaps it was more courteous to say nothing. If he — she — for of course she had permitted, perhaps advised, the gift — had intended him to thank them, would they have so carefully concealed their own generosity? . . . Be it so, then. But how would he not repay them for it! How delightful to be in her debt for anything — for everything! Would that he could have the enjoyment of owing her existence itself!

So he took the coin, bought unto himself a cloak of the most philosophic fashion, and went his way, such as it was, rejoicing.

But his faith in Christianity? What had become of that?

What usually happens in such cases. It was not dead; but nevertheless it had fallen fast asleep for the time being. He did not disbelieve it; he would have been shocked to hear such a thing asserted of him: but he happened to be busy believing something

else — geometry, conic sections, cosmogonies, psychologies and what not. And so it befel that he had not just then time to believe in Christianity. He recollected at times its existence; but even then, he neither affirmed nor denied it. When he had solved the great questions — those which Hypatia set forth as the roots of all knowledge — how the world was made, and what was the origin of evil, and what his own personality was, and — that being settled — whether he had one, with a few other preliminary matters, then it would be time to return, with his enlarged light, to the study of Christianity; and if, of course, Christianity should be found to be at variance with that enlarged light, as Hypatia seemed to think. . . . Why, then — What then? . . . He would not think about such disagreeable possibilities. Sufficient for the day was the evil thereof. Possibilities? It was impossible. . . . Philosophy could not mislead. Had not Hypatia defined it, as man's search after the unseen? And if he found the unseen by it, did it not come to just the same thing as if the unseen had revealed itself to him? And he must find it — for logic and mathematics could not err. If every step was correct, the conclusion must be correct also; so he must end, after all, in the right path — that is, of course, supposing Christianity to be the right path — and return to fight the church's battles, with the sword which he had wrested from Goliath the Philistine. . . . But he had not won the sword yet: and in the mean while, learning was weary work; and sufficient for the day was the good, as well as the evil, thereof.

So, enabled by his gold coin each month to devote himself entirely to study, he became very much what

Peter would have coarsely termed a heathen. At first, indeed, he slipped into the Christian churches, from a habit of conscience. But habits soon grow sleepy; the fear of discovery and recapture made his attendance more and more of a labour. And keeping himself apart as much as possible from the congregation, as a lonely and secret worshipper, he soon found himself as separate from them in heart as in daily life. He felt that they, and even more than they, those flowery and bombastic pulpit rhetoricians, who were paid for their sermons by the clapping and cheering of the congregation, were not thinking of, longing after, the same things as himself. Besides, he never spoke to a Christian; for the negress at his lodgings seemed to avoid him — whether from modesty or terror, he could not tell; and cut off thus from the outward "communion of saints," he found himself fast parting away from the inward one. So he went no more to church; and looked the other way, he hardly knew why, whenever he passed the Cæsareum; and Cyril, and all his mighty organization, became to him another world, with which he had even less to do than with those planets over his head, whose mysterious movements, and symbolisms, and influences Hypatia's lectures on astronomy were just opening before his bewildered imagination.

Hypatia watched all this with growing self-satisfaction, and fed herself with the dream that through Philammon she might see her wildest hopes realized. After the manner of women, she crowned him, in her own imagination, with all powers and excellences which she would have wished him to possess, as well as with those which he actually manifested, till Phil-

ammon would have been as much astonished as self-glorified could he have seen the idealized caricature of himself which the sweet enthusiast had painted for her private enjoyment. They were blissful months, those, to poor Hypatia. Orestes, for some reason or other, had neglected to urge his suit, and the Iphigenia-sacrifice had retired mercifully into the background. Perhaps she should be able now to accomplish all without it. And yet — it was so long to wait! Years might pass before Philammon's education was matured, and with them golden opportunities which might never recur again.

"Ah!" she sighed at times, "that Julian had lived a generation later! That I could have brought all my hard-earned treasures to the feet of the Poet of the Sun, and cried, "Take me! — Hero, warrior, statesman, sage, priest of the God of Light! Take thy slave! Command her — send her — to martyrdom, if thou wilt!" A petty price would that have been wherewith to buy the honour of being the meanest of thy apostles, the fellow-labourer of Iamblichus, Maximus, Libanius, and the choir of sages who upheld the throne of the last true Cæsar!"

CHAPTER XV.

Nephelococcuguia.

HYPATIA had always avoided carefully discussing with Philammon any of those points on which she differed from his former faith. She was content to let the divine light of philosophy penetrate by its own power, and educe its own conclusions. But one day, at the very time at which this history reopens, she was tempted to speak more openly to her pupil than she yet had done. Her father had introduced him, a few days before, to a new work of hers on Mathematics; and the delighted and adoring look with which the boy welcomed her, as he met her in the Museum Gardens, pardonably tempted her curiosity to inquire what miracles her own wisdom might have already worked. She stopped in her walk, and motioned her father to begin a conversation with Philammon.

"Well!" asked the old man, with an encouraging smile, "and how does our pupil like his new —"

"You mean my conic sections, father? It is hardly fair to expect an unbiassed answer in my presence."

"Why so?" said Philammon. "Why should I not tell you, as well as all the world, the fresh and wonderful field of thought which they have opened to me, in a few short hours?"

"What then?" asked Hypatia, smiling, as if she

knew what the answer would be. "In what does my commentary differ from the original text of Apollonius, on which I have so faithfully based it?"

"Oh, as much as a living body differs from a dead one. Instead of mere dry disquisitions on the properties of lines and curves, I found a mine of poetry and theology. Every dull mathematical formula seemed transfigured, as if by a miracle, into the symbol of some deep and noble principle of the unseen world."

"And do you think that he of Perga did not see as much? or that we can pretend to surpass, in depth of insight, the sages of the elder world? Be sure that they, like the poets, meant only spiritual things, even when they seem to talk only of physical ones, and concealed heaven under an earthly garb, only to hide it from the eyes of the profane; while we, in these degenerate days, must interpret and display each detail to the dull ears of men."

"Do you think, my young friend," asked Theon, "that mathematics can be valuable to the philosopher otherwise than as vehicles of spiritual truth? Are we to study numbers merely that we may be able to keep accounts; or as Pythagoras did, in order to deduce from their laws the ideas by which the universe, man, Divinity itself, consists?"

"That seems to me certainly to be the nobler purpose."

"Or conic sections, that we may know better how to construct machinery; or rather to devise from them symbols of the relations of Deity to its various emanations?"

"You use your dialectic like Socrates himself, my father," said Hypatia.

"If I do, it is only for a temporary purpose. I should be sorry to accustom Philammon to suppose that the essence of philosophy was to be found in those minute investigations of words and analyses of notions, which seem to constitute Plato's chief power in the eyes of those who, like the Christian sophist Augustine, worship his letter while they neglect his spirit; not seeing that those dialogues, which they fancy the shrine itself, are but vestibules —"

"Say rather, veils, father."

"Veils, indeed, which were intended to baffle the rude gaze of the carnal minded; but still vestibules, through which the enlightened soul might be led up to the inner sanctuary, to the Hesperid gardens and golden fruit of the Timæus and the oracles. . . . And for myself, were but those two books left, I care not whether every other writing in the world perished to-morrow." *

"You must except Homer, father."

"Yes, for the herd. . . . . But of what use would he be to them without some spiritual commentary?"

"He would tell them as little, perhaps, as the circle tells to the carpenter who draws one with his compasses."

"And what is the meaning of the circle?" asked Philammon.

"It may have infinite meanings, like every other natural phenomenon; and deeper meanings in proportion to the exaltation of the soul which beholds it. But, consider, is it not, as the one perfect figure, the

* This astounding speech is usually attributed to Proclus, Hypatia's "great" successor.

very symbol of the totality of the spiritual world; which, like it, is invisible, except at its circumference, where it is limited by the dead gross phenomena of sensuous matter? And even as the circle takes its origin from one centre, itself unseen, — a point, as Euclid defines it, whereof neither parts, nor magnitude can be predicated, — does not the world of spirits revolve round one abysmal being, unseen and indefinable — in itself, as I have so often preached, nothing, for it is conceivable only by the negation of all properties, even of those of reason, virtue, force: and yet, like the centre of the circle, the cause of all other existences?"

"I see," said Philammon; for the moment, certainly, the said abysmal Deity struck him as a somewhat chill and barren notion. . . . . but that might be caused only by the dulness of his own spiritual perceptions. At all events, if it was a logical conclusion, it must be right.

"Let that be enough for the present. Hereafter you may be — I fancy that I know you well enough to prophesy that you will be — able to recognise in the equilateral triangle inscribed within the circle, and touching it only with its angles, the three supra-sensual principles of existence, which are contained in deity as it manifests itself in the physical universe, coinciding with its utmost limits, and yet, like it, independent on that unseen central One which none dare name."

"Ah!" said poor Philammon, blushing scarlet at the sense of his own dulness, "I am, indeed, not worthy to have such wisdom wasted upon my imperfect apprehension. . . . . But, if I may dare to ask

. . . . does not Apollonius regard the circle, like all other curves, as not depending primarily on its own centre for its existence, but as generated by the section of any cone by a plane at right angles to its axis?"

"But must we not draw, or at least conceive a circle, in order to produce that cone? And is not the axis of that cone determined by the centre of that circle?"

Philammon stood rebuked.

"Do not be ashamed; you have only, unwittingly, laid open another, and, perhaps, as deep a symbol. Can you guess what it is?"

Philammon puzzled in vain.

"Does it not show you this? That, as every conceivable right section of the cone discloses the circle, so in all which is fair and symmetric you will discover Deity, if you but analyze it in a right and symmetric direction?"

"Beautiful!" said Philammon, while the old man added,

"And does it not show us, too, how the one perfect and original philosophy may be discovered in all great writers, if we have but that scientific knowledge, which will enable us to extract it?"

"True, my father: but just now, I wish Philammon, by such thoughts as I have suggested, to rise to that higher and more spiritual insight into nature, which reveals her to us as instinct throughout — all fair and noble forms of her at least — with Deity itself; to make him feel that it is not enough to say, with the Christians, that God has made the world, if we make that very assertion an excuse for believing that his presence has been ever since withdrawn from it."

"Christians, I think, would hardly say that," said Philammon.

"Not in words. But, in fact, they regard Deity as the maker of a dead machine, which, once made, will move of itself thenceforth, and repudiate as heretics every philosophic thinker, whether Gnostic or Platonist, who, unsatisfied with so dead, barren, and sordid a conception of the glorious all, wishes to honour the Deity by acknowledging his universal presence, and to believe, honestly, the assertion of their own Scriptures, that He lives and moves, and has his being in the universe."

Philammon gently suggested that the passage in question was worded somewhat differently in the Scripture.

"True. But if the one be true, its converse will be true also. If the universe lives and moves, and has its being in Him, must He not necessarily pervade all things?"

"Why? — Forgive my dulness, and explain."

"Because, if He did not pervade all things, those things which He did not pervade would be as it were interstices in His being, and in so far, without Him?"

"True, but still they would be within His circumference."

"Well argued. But yet they would not live in Him, but in themselves. To live in Him they must be pervaded by His life. Do you think it possible — do you think it even reverent to affirm that there can be anything within the infinite glory of Deity which has the power of excluding from the space which it occupies that very being from which it draws its worth,

and which must have originally pervaded that thing, in order to bestow on it its organization and its life? Does He retire after creating, from the spaces which he occupied during creation, reduced to the base necessity of making room for His own universe, and endure the suffering — for the analogy of all material nature tells us that it is suffering — of a foreign body, like a thorn within the flesh, subsisting within his own substance? Rather believe that His wisdom and splendour, like a subtle and piercing fire, insinuates itself eternally with resistless force through every organized atom, and that were it withdrawn but for an instant from the petal of the meanest flower, gross matter, and the dead chaos from which it was formed, would be all which would remain of its loveliness.....

"Yes" — she went on, after the method of her school, who preferred, like most decaying ones, harangues to dialectic, and synthesis to induction. . . . "Look at yon lotus-flower, rising like Aphrodite from the wave in which it has slept throughout the night, and saluting, with bending swan-neck, that sun which it will follow lovingly around the sky. Is there no more there than brute matter, pipes and fibres, colour and shape, and the meaningless life-in-death which men call vegetation? Those old Egyptian priests knew better, who could see in the number, in the form of those ivory petals and golden stamina, in that mysterious daily birth out of the wave, in that nightly baptism, from which it rises each morning re-born to a new life, the signs of some divine idea, some mysterious law, common to the flower itself, to the white-robed priestess who held it in the temple-rites, and to the goddess to whom they both were consecrated. . . . The

flower of Isis! . . . Ah — well. Nature has her sad symbols, as well as her fair ones. And in proportion as a misguided nation has forgotten the worship of her to whom they owed their greatness, for novel and barbaric superstitions, so has her sacred flower grown rarer and more rare, till now — fit emblem of the worship over which it used to shed its perfume — it is only to be found in gardens such as these — a curiosity to the vulgar, and, to such as me, a lingering monument of wisdom and of glory past away."

Philammon, it may be seen, was far advanced by this time; for he bore the allusions to Isis without the slightest shudder. Nay — he dared even to offer consolation to the beautiful mourner.

"The philosopher," he said, "will hardly lament the loss of a mere outward idolatry. For if, as you seem to think, there were a root of spiritual truth in the symbolism of nature, that cannot die. And thus the lotus-flower must still retain its meaning, as long as its species exists on earth."

"Idolatry!" answered she, with a smile. "My pupil must not repeat to me that worn-out Christian calumny. Into whatsoever low superstitions the pious vulgar may have fallen, it is the Christians now, and not the heathens, who are idolaters. They who ascribe miraculous power to dead men's bones; who make temples of charnel-houses, and bow before the images of the meanest of mankind, have surely no right to accuse of idolatry the Greek or the Egyptian, who embodies in a form of symbolic beauty ideas beyond the reach of words.

"Idolatry? Do I worship the Pharos when I gaze at it, as I do for hours, with loving awe, as the token

to me of the all-conquering might of Hellas? Do I worship the roll on which Homer's words are written, when I welcome with delight the celestial truths which it unfolds to me, and even prize and love the material book for the sake of the message which it brings? Do you fancy that any but the vulgar worship the image itself, or dream that it can help or hear them? Does the lover mistake his mistress's picture for the living, speaking reality? We worship the idea of which the image is a symbol. Will you blame us because we use that symbol to represent the idea to our own affections and emotions, instead of leaving it a barren notion, a vague imagination of our own intellect?"

"Then," asked Philammon, with a faltering voice, yet unable to restrain his curiosity, "then you do reverence the heathen gods?"

Why Hypatia should have felt this question a sore one, puzzled Philammon; but she evidently did feel it as such, for she answered haughtily enough —

"If Cyril had asked me that question, I should have disdained to answer. To you I will tell, that before I can answer your question you must learn what those whom you call heathen gods are. The vulgar, or rather those who find it their interest to calumniate the vulgar for the sake of confounding philosophers with them, may fancy them mere human beings, subject like man to the sufferings of pain and love, to the limitations of personality. We, on the other hand, have been taught by the primæval philosophers of Greece, by the priests of ancient Egypt, and the sages of Babylon, to recognise in them the universal powers of nature, those children of the all-quickening spirit, which are but various emanations of the one primeval

unity — say rather, various phases of that unity, as it has been variously conceived, according to the differences of climate and race, by the wise of different nations. And thus, in our eyes, he who reverences the many, worships by that very act, with the highest and fullest adoration, the one of whose perfection they are the partial antitypes; perfect each in themselves, but each the image of only one of its perfections."

"Why, then," said Philammon, much relieved by this explanation, "do you so dislike Christianity? may it not be one of the many methods?" —

"Because," she answered, interrupting him impatiently, "because it denies itself to be one of those many methods, and stakes its existence on the denial; because it arrogates to itself the exclusive revelation of the Divine, and cannot see, in its self-conceit, that its own doctrines disprove that assumption by their similarity to those of all creeds. There is not a dogma of the Galileans which may not be found, under some form or other, in some of those very religions from which it pretends to disdain borrowing."

"Except," said Theon, "its exaltation of all which is human and low-born, illiterate and levelling."

"Except that — But look! here comes some one whom I cannot — do not choose to meet. Turn this way — quick!"

And Hypatia, turning pale as death, drew her father with unphilosophic haste down a side walk.

"Yes," she went on to herself, as soon as she had recovered her equanimity. "Were this Galilean superstition content to take its place humbly among the other 'religiones licitas' of the empire, one might tolerate it well enough, as an anthropomorphic adumbra-

tion of divine things fitted for the base and toiling herd; perhaps peculiarly fitted, because peculiarly flattering to them. But now —"

"There is Miriam again," said Philammon, "right before us!"

"Miriam?" asked Hypatia, severely. "You know her, then? How is that?"

"She lodges at Eudæmon's house, as I do," answered Philammon, frankly. "Not that I ever interchanged, or wish to interchange, a word with so base a creature."

"Do not! I charge you!" said Hypatia, almost imploringly. But there was now no way of avoiding her, and perforce Hypatia and her tormentress met face to face.

"One word! one moment, beautiful lady," began the old woman, with a slavish obeisance. "Nay, do not push by so cruelly. I have — see what, I have for you!" and she held out, with a mysterious air, "The Rainbow of Solomon."

"Ah! I knew you would stop a moment — not for the ring's sake, of course, nor even for the sake of one who once offered it to you. — Ah! and where is he now? Dead of love, perhaps! At least, here is his last token to the fairest one, the cruel one. . . . . Well, perhaps she is right. . . . . To be an empress — an empress! . . . Far finer than anything the poor Jew could have offered. . . . But still . . . . An empress need not be above hearing her subjects' petition" . . . .

All this was uttered rapidly, and in a wheedling undertone, with a continual snaky writhing of her whole body, except her eye, which seemed, in the intense fixity of its glare to act as a fulcrum for all her

limbs; and from that eye, as long as it kept its mysterious hold, there was no escaping.

"What do you mean? What have I to do with this ring?" asked Hypatia, half frightened.

"He who owned it once, offers it to you now. You recollect a little black agate — a paltry thing..... If you have not thrown it away, as you most likely have, he wishes to redeem it with this opal . . . a gem surely more fit for such a hand as that."

"He gave me the agate, and I shall keep it."

"But this opal — worth, oh worth ten thousand gold pieces — in exchange for that paltry broken thing, not worth one?"

"I am not a dealer, like you, and have not yet learnt to value things by their money price. If that agate had been worth money, I would never have accepted it."

"Take the ring, take it, my darling," whispered Theon, impatiently; "it will pay all our debts."

"Ah, that it will — pay them all," answered the old woman, who seemed to have mysteriously overheard him.

"What? — my father! Would you, too, counsel me to be so mercenary? My good woman," she went on, turning to Miriam, "I cannot expect you to understand the reason of my refusal. You and I have a different standard of worth. But, for the sake of the talisman engraven on that agate, if for no other reason, I cannot give it up."

"Ah! for the sake of the talisman! That is wise, now! That is noble! Like a philosopher! Oh, I will not say a word more. Let the beautiful prophetess keep the agate, and take the opal too; for see, there

is a charm on it also! The name by which Solomon compelled the demons to do his bidding. Look! What might you not do now, if you knew how to use that! To have great glorious angels, with six wings each, bowing at your feet whensoever you called them, and saying, 'Here am I, mistress, send me.' Only look at it!"

Hypatia took the tempting bait, and examined it with more curiosity than she would have wished to confess; while the old woman went on: —

"But the wise lady knows how to use the black agate, of course? Aben-Ezra told her that, did he not?"

Hypatia blushed somewhat; she was ashamed to confess that Aben-Ezra had not revealed the secret to her, probably not believing that there was any, and that the talisman had been to her only a curious plaything, of which she liked to believe one day that it might possibly have some occult virtue, and the next day to laugh at the notion as unphilosophical and barbaric; so she answered, rather severely, that her secrets were her own property.

"Ah, then! she knows it all — the fortunate lady! And the talisman has told her whether Heraclian has lost or won Rome by this time, and whether she is to be the mother of a new dynasty of Ptolemies, or to die a virgin, which the Four Angels avert! And surely she has had the great Dæmon come to her already, when she rubbed the flat side, has she not!"

"Go, foolish woman; I am not like you, the dupe of childish superstitions."

"Childish superstitions! Ha! ha! ha!" said the old woman, as she turned to go, with obeisances more

lowly than ever. "And she has not seen the Angels yet! . . . . Ah well! perhaps some day, when she wants to know how to use the talisman, the beautiful lady will condescend to let the poor old Jewess show her the way."

And Miriam disappeared down an alley, and plunged into the thickest shrubberies, while the three dreamers went on their way.

Little thought Hypatia that the moment the old woman had found herself alone, she had dashed herself down on the turf, rolling and biting at the leaves, like an infuriated wild beast. . . . . "I will have it yet! I will have it, if I tear out her heart with it!"

END OF VOL. I.

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